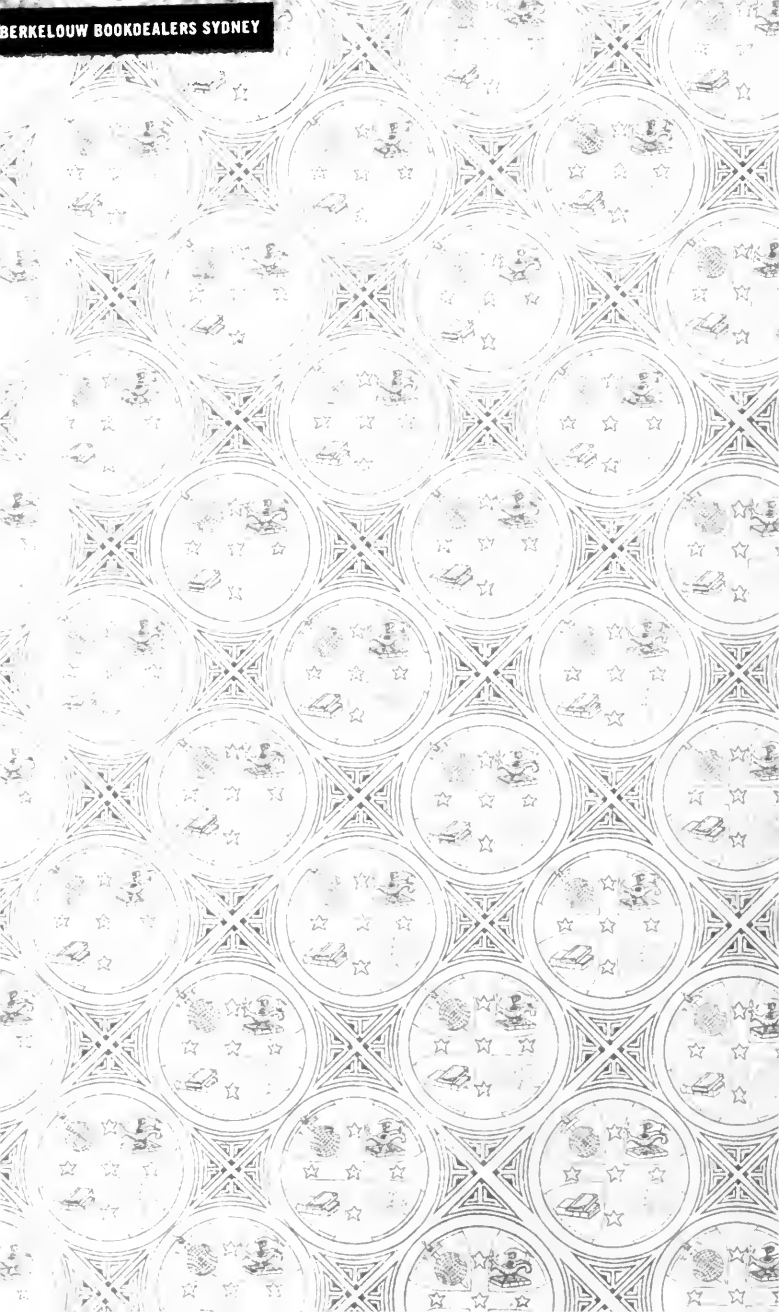



IN SUNSHINE
AND IN SHADOW

By
Lucy K. Wyland





From W S
to
Lizzie Sandover
April 21st 1894.



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IN SUNSHINE

AND

IN SHADOW

BY

INEZ K. HYLAND

" She shall not pass without her requiem :
Though my name perish, yet shall hers endure.
Though I should be forgotten, she, lost gem,
Shall be remembered—though she sought not fame
It shall be busy with her beauteous name.

* * * * *

" For I will raise in her bright memory—
Lost now on earth—a lasting monument,
And graven on it shall recorded be
That all her rays to light mankind were spent.

* * * * *

" And this was graven on the pure white stone,
In golden letters : ' While she lived she shone.' "

" *The Star's Monument.*"—JEAN INGELow.

Melbourne

GEORGE ROBERTSON AND COMPANY

AND AT

SYDNEY, ADELAIDE, BRISBANE, AND LONDON

1893



Stack
Annex

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DEDICATED

TO

All who hold her Memory Dear.

AT the request of many friends I publish this little volume of poems and short stories, written by my beloved granddaughter. Much has necessarily been omitted, as they were for the most part written down on anything available at the moment—backs of envelopes, pieces of music, margins of books—in pencil, and in many instances almost illegible.

Thus I have had great difficulty in collecting them ; but I rest satisfied that, whatever their faults, they will meet with no harsh criticism, for her dear sake.

MARY PENFOLD.

2218270

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
DEDICATION - - - - -	iii
TO PENCIL AND PAPER - - - - -	1
A LILY'S SHADOW - - - - -	2
PHARAOH LIVES FOR EVER - - - - -	4
THE SINNER SPEAKS - - - - -	6
WILD DOG HILL - - - - -	11
THE PROBLEM - - - - -	13
THE HOSTEL OF THE HEART - - - - -	16
CALLA ETHIOPIA - - - - -	22
RECOMPENSE - - - - -	24
THE FATE OF TWO ROSES - - - - -	27
AN ANSWERED PRAYER - - - - -	29
HEARTSEASE - - - - -	31
DISLOYALTY - - - - -	33
ANANDA'S DREAM - - - - -	34
IN THE GARDEN IN THE ROSE TIME - - - - -	36
SEMELE - - - - -	40
JILTED - - - - -	41
ST. CATHERINE'S VOTARY - - - - -	43
TO A WAVE - - - - -	46
A CERTAINTY - - - - -	48
A FAIR FABLE - - - - -	49
AN OLD SORROW - - - - -	55
GRATITUDE - - - - -	57
THE LAND OF BEULAH - - - - -	59
A REASONABLE WOMAN - - - - -	61
MORIALTA : SONG OF THE WATERFALL - - - - -	62

	PAGE
TO MARGARET	65
THE DREAM OF SENSE	67
B——'S LETTER	74
DOT CONFIDES TO A FRIEND	76
DOT AIDS THE FAMILY FORTUNES	79
THE WILL O' THE LORD	82
DESTINY	84
A VOICE FROM THE BACK BLOCKS	85
AUNT ROSE'S STORY	86
THE THEOSOPHIST	88
BOB'S DREAM	91
NIGHTFALL IN THE VINEYARD	93
ON A CHINESE FAN	94
THE BOWL OF LIFE	95
FROM AN ALMOND ORCHARD	96
FROM CONVENT WALLS	98
MINTHE	100
DREAMS	101
WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN	102
LOVE'S REQUIEM	103
THE FIRST TREASON	104
GOD'S HARVEST FIELD	105
A DREAM OF DAWN	107
A FORGOTTEN BIRTHDAY	110
FROTH	111
TO VIVIAN	112
TO ISABEL	114
A GOD'S TREASURE	116
AT TERAPENA STATION	117
GOLDEN SWALLOWS	119
A MAD POET'S SONG	120
A VIEW FROM A LANE AT MAGILL IN JULY	122
AUSTRALIAN LOVE SONG	123
A MIGHTY QUESTION	124
UNITED	125
FLOWN : A CHANSONNETTE	126

CONTENTS.

vii

	PAGE
TILL: A COGENT REASON - - - - -	127
A SHATTERED IDOL - - - - -	128
NONSENSE VERSES - - - - -	129
THE LORD IS RISEN - - - - -	131
A SLOW AND STUPID SONG - - - - -	133
PA'S FAIRY TALE - - - - -	134
IN A DRY LAND - - - - -	136
AN ANGEL UNAWARES - - - - -	137
SONG - - - - -	138
THE SCARLET FEATHER - - - - -	139
A BUTTERFLY'S WING - - - - -	141
FIVE O'CLOCK TEA - - - - -	143
RAIN-DROPS AND ELVES - - - - -	146
UNSTABLE AS WATER - - - - -	148
TO MAGGIE - - - - -	149
A FRAGMENT: IN AN ASYLUM - - - - -	150
THE IDEAL FOR THE REAL - - - - -	152
KNOCK AT THE GOVERNMENT DOOR - - - - -	153
THE CICADA'S SONG - - - - -	156
SONG: TO LILIAN - - - - -	157
ABRAHAM THE SECOND - - - - -	158
SPOKEN AT THE CLUB - - - - -	160
A SCHOOLGIRL'S STORY - - - - -	162
TO THE WEST WIND - - - - -	167
"WHY DO WOMEN WILT?" - - - - -	168
ABOVE RUBIES - - - - -	170
THE MOTHER'S VOICE - - - - -	171
GALATEA - - - - -	172
PHŒBUS - - - - -	173
THE PORT OF GUAM - - - - -	175
SOLILOQUY BY AN AUSTRALIAN MILLIONAIRE - - - - -	176
THE CAVE - - - - -	177
THE GIRL WHO LIVES NEXT DOOR - - - - -	178
AT SCOTT'S IN '91 - - - - -	179
TO A SUNFLOWER BY THE RIVER - - - - -	181
CHARMIAN THE SECOND - - - - -	182

	PAGE
IN A GARDEN BY THE TORRENS - - - -	185
AN OCTOBER SONG - - - - -	187
TO BRET HARTE - - - - -	188
MARGUERITE AND FAUST: A FRAGMENT - -	191
SONG: IT WAS THE TIME OF WATTLE BLOOM - -	192
IMITATION OF A GERMAN BALLAD - - -	193
SOUVENIRS - - - - -	195
BREAD AND WINE - - - - -	197
"BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART" - - -	198
TWO HOMES - - - - -	203
THE SEASONS - - - - -	204
THE CURLEW'S CRY - - - - -	226
THE GOLDEN GIFT - - - - -	227
A VOICE IN THE VINEYARD - - - - -	252
JONAH AND THE WHALE - - - - -	254
AHASUERUS - - - - -	265
LOT'S WIFE - - - - -	275

STORIES.

TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA ON 1ST JANUARY - -	280
WHAT THE WICKED MANDARIN SAID - - -	282
MY NEIGHBOUR ACROSS THE WAY - - -	291
T.B. - - - - -	298
THE DREAM CHILD - - - - -	316
SIMPSON'S VISION - - - - -	319
SUE TO JACKSON'S - - - - -	329
SCRAPS FROM THE PRINCESS FAL LAL - -	344
STORY OF A JAPANESE VASE - - - -	352

IN MEMORIAM - - - - -	354
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TO PENCIL AND PAPER.

ERRATA.

Page 18, line 25, *read* "needing" *instead of* "meeting."

„ 23,	„ 3,	„ "unceasing"	„ "increasing."
„ 60,	„ 22,	„ "fading"	„ "failing."
„ 66,	„ 8,	„ "jaw "	„ "jaws."
„ 172,	„ 9,	„ "lay "	„ "layed."

~~The girls all wished to marry.~~

Not one had time to think of me,
But voted me a "bother."
At last one happy day we three
Joined hands with one another.

I'm older, plainer, wiser now,
But now am lonely never :
We three have made a merry vow
That none shall part us ever.

	PAGE
IN A GARDEN BY THE TORRENS - - - -	185
AN OCTOBER SONG - - - - -	187
TO BRET HARTE - - - - -	188
MARGUERITE AND FAUST: A FRAGMENT - -	191
SONG: IT WAS THE TIME OF WATTLE BLOOM - -	192
IMITATION OF A GERMAN BALLAD - - -	193
SOUVENIRS - - - - -	195
BREAD AND WINE - - - - -	197
"BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART" - - -	198
TWO HOMES - - - - -	203

MY NEIGHBOUR ACROSS THE WAY - - - -	291
T.B. - - - - -	298
THE DREAM CHILD - - - - -	316
SIMPSON'S VISION - - - - -	319
SUE TO JACKSON'S - - - - -	329
SCRAPS FROM THE PRINCESS FAL LAL - - -	344
STORY OF A JAPANESE VASE - - - - -	352

IN MEMORIAM - - - - -	354
-----------------------	-----

TO PENCIL AND PAPER.




Oh, kindest friends I ever had !
When I was young and charming
A lonely life I thought was sad,
It's prospects quite alarming.

I longed to ope Thought's golden door
With friends ; but none would tarry :
The men said, "She's a dreadful bore,"
The girls all wished to marry.

Not one had time to think of me,
But voted me a "bother."
At last one happy day we three
Joined hands with one another.

I'm older, plainer, wiser now,
But now am lonely never :
We three have made a merry vow
That none shall part us ever.

A LILY'S SHADOW.


 IS a shaft of sunlight gleaming
 Down the dark'ning oaken stair :
 It was merely idle dreaming
 Made it seem a girl's gold hair.

'Tis a lily's shadow dances
 To and fro upon the wall ;
 From the garden's spiced expanses
 'Twas the breeze sighed, that was all.

It was merely idle dreaming
 Made the flower shade a form,
 Gave it a deceitful seeming
 Of a presence live and warm.

Laughing, gracious, loving presence
 Which one summer danced the floor,
 Called from out the shady pleasance,
 Peered around my study door.

Surely 'tis a hand which lingers
Tapping on the mullioned pane—
Nay, a rose's pink-flushed fingers
Jewelled by the summer rain.


'Tis a bird's voice which is singing
In a sweet, regretful tone,
Of the shadows night is bringing,
And a day for ever flown.

1890.



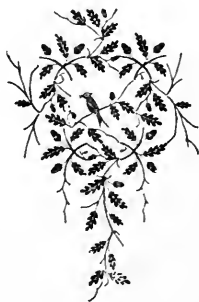
PHARAOH LIVES FOR EVER.

[Suggested by a photo. of the mummy of Rameses the Great.]


 MOST mighty monarch, can it be that thou,
 "Sun of the sun, giver of life," art now
 Torn from thy tomb, thine unguent-scented
 shrouds,
 And set drear sight of death to gaping crowds,
 While in the shelter of their unknown graves
 In quiet sleep the meanest of thy slaves?
 "For ever Pharaoh lives!" their taskmen cried;
 "For ever Pharaoh lives!" thy slaves replied,
 And with the lie upon their lips they died.

Above the greedy sand sea's scorching tide
 The Sphinx still rears her head, her eyes still wide
 In questioning wonder of the things that are—
 Oppression, crime, the poor's estate, and war.
 Slaves in the night of time wrought in those eyes
 That mute inquiry of their stifled cries.
 Hers is the voice—they dared not raise their own!
 And so graved prayer and anguish into stone.

Yet still she crouches o'er their perished flesh,
And in stern patience looks beyond the mesh
Of outworn laws still held by craft of man
In place—to be the shackle, bond, and ban
Of ev'ry suffering, toiling, slave-bound race,
And set man's heel upon his brother's face.
“For ever Pharaoh lives!” the poor man cries—
Oh! Justice, show the world that Pharaoh *dies*.



THE SINNER SPEAKS.



REMEMBER Ezekeel? Wal, all I know
 O' him wuz, he lived in the long ago
 When the Lord on earth with his people
 walked,
 An' maybe religion wasn't so hawked
 Around an' about as it is ter-day,
 An' folks wuz better, I'm bold ter say.
 Do I know the vishun Ezekeel saw?
 No, I don't, an' don't want ter ; nor
 Kin I reely say as it's my desire
 Ter hear ez the wicked shall burn in fire,
 Nor that the speshul office o' God
 Is ter chas'en sinners with scourge an' rod ;
 An' ez I'm speakin' I'll jest remark
 Thet it ain't enlivnen hevin ter hark
 Ter you goin' on in the same ole strain,
 Ez man is a wurm an' his ways is vain.
 Ef man *is* a wurm an' ter-morrow's naught
 It s'prises me ez you should a sought
 Ter go through life with a wurm like me
 Thet yer allus a-jawing an' carn't let be.
 Yer did it so as I'd get ter hevin?

I tell yer, M'riar, there's more men driv'n
Ter hell by wimmin's preachy ways
Than there's butterflies on summer days.
Naw, yer needn't shake yer head an' groan—
I am a sinner, and that same I'll own,
But I won't go an' hear the deacon speak—
I think ez deacon's a reg'lar sneak.
I've borne yer long, an' the time's been when
I've wished in my soul agen an' agen
Ez thet door there wud open wide
An' Polly, my fust, walk in by my side.
I'll bet ef Polly wuz given her choice
She'd sooner be here than raisin' her voice
Up above with the angel marms ;
For she never were no great shakes at sarms,
An' ez for textes, I b'lieve, M'riar,
Ez Polly hed nary one ter fire.
When thet cow critter on my foot trod
She never remarked, I should "kiss the rod,"
An' when the boys wur a trifle wild
It warn't "Spare the rod an' spile the child :"
It must hev bin ez she didn't know.
Ter think ez such 'kayshuns hev bin let go !
Do I know the end o' the wicked man ?
I reckon I've heard ; an', M'riar Anne,
I've borne with you ten year an' more,
An' thought, perhaps, when you plainly saw
Ez how I didn't keer to be driven
Along in your speshul car to hevin
You'd give over preachin' an' let me be,
But ez you hev'n't I'll let you see

What my views is in the hevinly line,
Tho' o' grace I hevn't no speshul sign.
The day ez I took my wheat ter town
Ridin' along comes ole man Brown—
“Morning, Jonson, wot machine
Hev you bin usin' this year ter clean?”
“Eclipse,” sez I; “Wal, now,” sez he,
“Dix's patent's the one fur me.”
We hedn't gone 'bove another mile
When cant'rin' up come Nathan Wile;
“Morning, Jonson, wot machine
Hev you bin usin' this year ter clean?
There's nawt I think's the ekal on
Parker and Jones's ‘Paragon.’”
Mebbe we met 'bout a dozen more,
An' each an' all o' 'em set sech store
On his pertickler own machine
Being the one as could really clean.
Wal, arter a bit we got ter town,
An' the buyer sez, sez he, ter Brown,
Notin' the sample with keerful eye—
“Ef it's all like this I reckon I'll buy.”
But he never arst us which machine
We'd each on us used that year to clean.
An' when we get to the He'v'nly Buyer
I guess it will be the same, M'riar;
He won't be arsting us wot machine,
Purvidin' the sample's sweet an' clean.
Babtist an' Methody—terms is vain:
The Lord will only look at the *grain*.

HER EULOGY.

Yes, she is gone, is M'riar—
Gone home to live with the Lord ;
At least I guess that's her present address,
For sech was her final word.

I hev my doubts about it—
I'm a onbeleven man ;
But deacon says he's sartin she's
In the bosom of Abraham.

He riles me that ar deacon—
It seems as if he'd own
Ez he and the Lord and Abraham
Had a speshul talaphone ;

Just a private wire atween em
To interchange their views,
And circilate to the latest date
Both airthly and hevinly news.

Do I miss her ?—miss M'riar ?
Wal, wal, per'aps I do ;
Not ez we two hed lived ez one—
No, no, we twain was two.

Polly an' me wuz one,
An' the day ez Polly died
I felt that day I'd lost
My karakter's brightest side.

But now M'riar's gone
I've only got the thought
I may do just as I chuse
And none say I didn't aught.

She war good, I know, war M'riar ;
Her ways wuz ez clean as paint ;
But somehow or other she seemed
Sech a aggrivatin' saint.

Allus seemed wrapt in a garmint
O' sech high-toned hevinly style
A man wuz 'feared to go nigh it,
Thinkin' the textur 'ud spile.

I know I should blush to own it,
But reely I'd sorrier bin
If M'riar hed hed in her natur'
One leetle spice o' sin.



WILD DOG HILL.



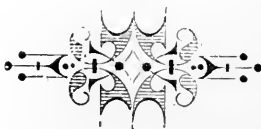
T lies before me, purple, far,
And o'er it hangs a yellow star.

* * * *

Oft was I told, in days of old,
In those enchanted regions
A Prince held state whose word was fate
To his attendant legions.
His were the slaves who lit the stars,
Who tinted all the flowers.
They flushed the skies
With sunset's dyes,
They changed the varied hours.
By night I watched the yellow star,
It seemed the golden portal
Through which the Prince ascended far
To realms unknown of mortal.
"If you are good," my granddam said,
"The Prince will come and take you,
Have you in richest robes arrayed,
Perhaps his Princess make you."
So in my trusting childhood's days
I paused from careless humming,
And wandered down the garden ways
To wonder—was he coming?

Gone, gone, are all those hopes and fears,
To-day I should but flout him,
For in these sordid later years
I've learned to do without him.
Yet sometimes as I toil among
The world's fierce strife and din
My heart is sore with all life's woes,
Its poverty and sin.
And then I long that he would come
And bear me fast and far,
Past purple mountain regions, home—
Home to the yellow star.

1887.



THE PROBLEM.

"A shoe and a fan," says Fal Lal. "Pooh! a man like that would not have been content with these; he would have kept a museum of them, and exhibited it to the Grads in his spare time.

"Item 1st.—Five locks of hair, uncertain.

„ 2nd.—A ring—Arabella Smith, 22, fair complexion, died.

„ 3rd.—A gold bangle—Jane Ross, brunette, married.

„ 4th.—A blue ribbon—Rosie, troublesome brothers.

"And so on, and so on."

—*Princess Fal Lal.*



WELL, well, the problem will not come right—

I'll give it best for a while;

Somehow or other my mind to-night

Wanders for many a mile.

God! how the Grads would laugh if they knew
 (To them I'm "Grinding Old Van");
 But little they reck of this dainty shoe
 Laid by with an amber fan.

A scent of orris comes from the fan,
 Like the ghost of a by-gone bliss—
 Jove! can it be that "Grinding Old Van"
 Ever had dreams like this?

The Grads would shout if they only knew—

Ah ! how they would laugh and jeer ;
But you've been hidden, my fan and shoe,
Hidden for many a year.

Do you remember the masquerade,
Where you flirted and danced, you two ?
A stolen walk where the fountains played,
And I swore I loved eyes of blue ?

Have you forgotten, my amber fan,
You hid two faces—like this—
And out on the whispering winds there ran
The sound of a sigh and a kiss ?

Gone are the hours forever, small shoe,
When in groves of orange we strayed ;
The sky, the sea, and her eyes were blue,
And the breeze among myrtles played.

Poor love ! she grieved when I went away,
Bearing as keepsake this shoe.
How was it here, under skies of grey,
I thought not of eyes of blue ?

Here the blue eyes seemed merely a dream,
Here I but panted for fame,
And love was quenched as a firefly's gleam,
While I only craved for a name.

Did the blue eyes weep, my scented fan,
When my letter arrived to say
That love which under blue skies began
Had ended 'neath skies of grey ?

One day there came a message—and you :
Few were the words it said ;
It only told under skies of blue
The light of blue eyes had fled.


Your amber flushed with a crimson flame,
I laid you by with the shoe ;
To-day the world resounds with my name
And nobody knows of—you.

The lamp is low, and the fire is out,
The Problem is yet to do.
When I am dead shall I dream about
A fan and a tiny shoe ?

January, 1888.



THE HOSTEL OF THE HEART.

 WAS spring—in country lanes the thorn
 was white ;
 'Twas spring—from blossomed boughs the
 blackcap sang ;
 'Twas spring—within the Hostel of the
 Heart

The casual guests who used the common room
 Smiled as they heard the gay girl-Hostess trill
 A song which seemed the very voice of spring.
 'Twas spring—along the road there strayed a youth ;
 He checked his journey at the Hostel door,
 And entered, glancing at the casual guests ,
 As though they trespassed in the common room.
 He called the Hostess, drawing her aside ;
 “ Have you no other room ? ” he questioned her,
 “ No inner chamber which is set apart,
 Where I might rest and be thine only charge ? ”
 She, blushing, answered, “ There is such a room.”
 “ Then lead me there,” he said. She still demurred.
 “ Long have I wandered, hard the way,” he cried ;
 “ I need thy care. Leave thou thine other guests ;
 'Tis I alone whom thou must henceforth tend.”

*

*

*

*

*

Where princes tarry peasants poorly fare.
The guests within the common room still stayed—
The gracious Hostess had desired they should ;
But though she smiled, and though they felt the warmth
Of youth in happiness within her speech,
They knew that in her life they had no part.
And so one winter morn they looked wide-eyed
To see among them in the common room,
With lips that smiled but eyes that strained afar,
The gentle Hostess. Much they questioned her—
“Where is thy guest, once thy peculiar care ?”
For they, like most, had none too fine a sense.
“He left this morning,” she replied ; then strove,
With hands that trembled, to rebuild the fire.
“It burns aside, and I have heard,” she said,
“That is a portent that beloved friends
In present absence will return no more.
What silence holds you ?—cannot one recount
Some legend quaint, some laughter-moving jest ?”
An aged man, with shaded eyes, began—
“I heard this morn, as on my bed I lay,
A song rise clearly through the coming dawn,
Carolled by one who rode without a care.
I cannot sing it : only youth could lilt
That song of joy. I will repeat the words.”

SONG.

Why should I trouble to gather the rose
Which hedged about in the garden grows :
A rose by the road hangs on every tree—
A rose of the road is the rose, then, for me.

Rose of the garden will last for life's day,
Rose of the road but an hour, so they say.
Well, what of that, so road rose has the power
To hold me well pleased for the swift-passing hour.

The hostess strove to thank the aged guest :
" 'Twas a light-hearted song, indeed," she said.
But from her place she quickly stole away,
And they, that day, beheld her not again.
A thriftless housewife was she of the Heart,
And reason could not make her understand
The leaping fire heaped in the inner room
Was needless now the princely guest was gone,
And needless now the broidered coverlets
With which his couch of down had been o'erlaid;
Needless those balms which, now not daily poured,
Haunted the chamber as dead roses do.
Oft to herself the hostess whispered low :
" He may return, not seeking, as before,
Myself alone, through all the wide, wide world."
'Twas thus the guest had spoken ; thus the bee,
Gadding abroad for varied sweets, may hum
To some rare flower which he by chance espies—
" I sought but thee," and enters rifling in.
" Not seeking me," the gentle Hostess mused.
But, meeting shelter and a kindly care,
He did not pass that way again, because
Such guests as he thus reason to themselves :
" A woman's heart's an inn ; who stays must pay !"
Such guests as he rise up at dawn and leave
The slumbering valley where the hostel lies

And from the light of the new day to come
Pass not a thought upon the shadowed vale
Where as a king they late were entertained.
Yet one small shade goes with them. It is this :
“ I must ride hard ; the Hostess may have friends,
Who may o’ertake and make me pay the score ! ”

* * * *

Sometimes the guests within the common room
Spoke of the guest who tarried in the spring
And used the splendour of the inner room.
The years had passed and he had gained a name,
Had written learned books which told how far
The distances between the unseen stars.
“ You knew him, did you not, in early life ? ”
The guests would ask the Hostess. From their minds
All mem’ry of that springtime tryst was gone,
And, save the Hostess, none there knew how rare
Had been the banquet in the inner room.
“ Do you remember him ? ” the guests went on ;
“ We know he tarried here one spring—some thought
He meant to tarry till the end of time.”
“ Ah ! that was gossip ; he is nobly wed,”
The sad-faced Hostess of the Heart would say,
“ Recall his features, pray,” the guests would plead,
“ Gone with the years his semblance from our minds.”
The Hostess glanced within the inner room,
Whither the guests’ eyes could not go. There hung
A crystal mirror on the wall ; and there
Within its depths (as in the nymph’s clear well
Young Hylas lay) so showed the fair, proud face

Of the swift-passing guest who came with spring ;
And gazing on this face the Hostess brought
His vanished features to their minds again.
In old Pompeii fair the frescoes glow
When freshly wet with water is the wall—
Thus mem'ry's frescoes brighter gleam through tears.

* * * * *

One day the guests came to the common room :
The door was broken, fireless was the hearth,
The mice walked fearless on the ash-strewn floor.
They gazed upon each other, and they asked,
“ Where is the Hostess ? We have heard it told
Within this Hostel is an inner room.”
They sought for long, but could not find the door ;
At length one guest espied a graven box,
Of wood “ which scents the axe that lays it low,”
And breaking open the confining clasps
Drew forth some scraps of rhyme, a slender ring,
And notices from various journals cut,
All speaking praise of a great man's career.
As by the chart the seaman finds the strait
Which gains him entrance to his destined port,
So by these papers did the guests arrive
Within the precincts of the inner room.
Beside the hearth, now piled with crumbling ash,
The silent hostess lay—one hand outstretched
As though her final strength had stirred the fire.
The guests with rev'rence raised her to the bed—
The broider'd coverlets were needed now.
They placed no flowers about her, for they saw

One fast-closed hand held firm a crumbling rose.
Where was the portrait of her springtime guest,
The portrait which the Hostess life-like brought
Before her guests within the common room ?
Upon the wall a crystal mirror hung,
But when the guests had looked within they saw
A face where coming age and worldly cares
Had drawn deep lines and marred its gracious mould.
Where was the portrait gone of beauteous youth,
That face of high resolve and purpose pure ?—
Gone with the Hostess to Elysian fields :
The Gods are merciful—she holds it there.



CALLA ETHIOPICA.



N ages past, in days when Thebes was young,
 A grateful Prince of Ethiopia hung
 His ivory drinking cup upon a tree
 Beside the Nile, as a token he
 And all his army would not thankless seem
 For soothing water of the pleasant stream,
 Which had allayed the thirst of men near parched
 To fever by the weary miles they'd marched.
 The Prince passed on. The tree which bore the cup
 (From out whose centre a gold tube stood up,
 So that the royal Prince could slowly sip
 The cooling draught unto the thirsty lip)
 Now shook her leaves and tossed her graceful head,
 And to her less well-favoured sisters said :
 " Oh, trees of mean estate, incline to me
 In rev'rence. I am now a royal tree.
 To me ye shall be subject, me obey."
 With haughty words she vexed them through the day,
 And many days, until a stately Palm
 Spake to her kindred : " Isis, tender, calm-
 Eyed Isis, will, if prayed, with wisdom bless
 The suppliants, and the boastful haughtiness
 Of this vain tree to nothing might be brought."
 So with one voice the goddess they besought—

“Oh, Isis, great all-mother, hear our prayer ;
Note how betroubled is the forest air—
Both night and day this tree increasing grieves
Our humbler state by fluttering her leaves
And taunting that we are not decked like her.”
No answer came. The proud tree’s ceaseless stir
Seemed to deride their prayer ; but soon a hush
Fell on the forest, and the swirling rush
Of the swift water seemed to slack, then cease ;
Even the upstart tree was still. Soft Peace
Seemed to hold earth in a prolonged embrace,
And all things mortal wore a fairer face :
Isis, majestic, moved beside the Nile.
No mortal thing may view her, save the while
The mortal sight is closed. The Palm Tree saw
A form which filled her rev’rent soul with awe —
Isis, the all-productive, fruitful one,
Whose face is brighter than the heaven’s sun.
The goddess passed. Once more the proud tree vexed
The air with boasts—but not for long. Perplexed
Full sore was she, when dawn came, to behold
Beside the stream, each with its tube of gold,
Ten thousand cups of ivory, rank on rank,
Stretching away along the river bank,
Revealing to her jealous, shamefaced sight
A purer ivory and a gold more bright
Than that of her esteemed drinking horn :
Thus was the Ethiopian Lily born.

RECOMPENSE.



HE western heavens' golden flood
 Threw on the eastern sky
 The flush of a pink rose's bud;
 Dark cypress trees stood high
 On shadowed hills—against the glow
 Their sadness seemed to me
 To cloud the sunset's brilliant show,
 And out of harmony
 With all the pageantry and flare
 Of high September's state :
 The time when every wand'ring air
 Bore perfumed blossom freight.
 The slope whereon our footsteps strayed
 With foamy bloom was white,
 Like chastened ghosts of mists which made
 The town secure from sight,
 But could not dim one splendid spire,
 Which like a flaming rod
 Reached up—a token of desire
 And human need of God.
 Above the western amber glow,
 Through skies of chrysoprase

The young moon braved her silver prow.
You told your love—alas!
The words you spoke were very few,
And I cannot forget ;
But, though nor you nor they were true,
Sweet is their echo yet.
The nearness of empurpled hills
Seemed as a presence fine,
To guard our troth from earthly ills
And make our love divine.
A nesting bird with joyance sang
From scented wattle's floss,
In gullies deep the sheep-bells rang,
Down where the waters toss ;
The ling'ring glow upon the crown
Of gums set flaming light—
'Twas as a torch defiant thrown
Against the force of night.
The scent of spring was on the earth,
With spring each pulse was thrilled,
A cricket's voice in thin, high mirth
Spring's praise exultant shrilled.

* * * *

November time. The words you wrote
Came like a shadow drear
Across the sun—the grating note
Of pain is always near ;
The sable singer of the heat
Has caught its piercing tone,

And winds that come from lands of wheat
Seem sighing, "Lone ! alone !"
But though you played a cruel part,
Nor deigned to send or say
One word to soothe my aching heart,
Yet *still* it holds *that* day.

1889.



THE FATE OF TWO ROSES :

AN INVALID'S REVERIE.



O glimpse of dawn ! how night's hours crawl !
 The rose a neighbour brought,
 In this dim light, upon the wall
 Casts changing shadows. Thought,

Worst demon of my helpless state,
 Brings back a garden old,
 Which Youth's eyes, with life's wine elate,
 Beheld through mists of gold.

One May the throstles gaily sang
 From hawthorn's blossomed foam,
 While gayer yet a girl's voice rang
 From out her leaf-hid home.

And fairer than the roses' bloom
 Which decked the garden's bowers,
 And sweeter than their rich perfume,
 Was Rose—my "Queen of Flowers."

Yet in that garden birds may sing
Gay as in the time gone by,
Still may the fragrant lilies swing
Their ivory censers high—


Still stand like white-robed acolytes
Against the low mossed wall,
By which in summer's scented nights
There stole a light footfall.

I know not : for when June was gone,
Gone, too, the garden's charm.
The man who steals the golden corn
Is heedless of the haulm.

Aloud.—The room is close this August night,
That rose is over sweet,
Its colour wearies on my sight,
Nurse, throw it in the street.



AN ANSWERED PRAYER.


 HE years have gone : they with them little
 brought,
 But much have borne away of purport strong,
 And glowing fire, and ecstasy of youth.
 I well remember, in the far-off days,
 I used to go through paddocks of wild grass
 To where a creek, a slender, sluggish thing,
 Made to the reeds and stones a murmur faint.
 Half-hidden by wild celery and mint
 A fallen tree checked the slow-gliding stream,
 Which had not power to overleap the bar,
 And so curved round on shallow gravel bed.
 Upon that trunk, in summer time, I saw
 Strange uncouth shapes crawl from the water-world,
 Bask in the sun, throb as with anguish rent ;
 Then the rude form was like a garb despised
 And laid aside ; for in that rending throe
 Bright, beauteous beings were revealed. A pause
 Of a few minutes' space, as if the glare
 Of light, new found, was almost too supreme,
 Then the new creature spread its gauzy wings
 In regal pomp of purple, green, and gold,
 And soared to live its splendid little day,

To sport in sunshine and to die in storm.
“Fate, make me like to these,” I cried, youth wise,
“Let this tame, humble lot I now endure
Be mine no more.” The fevered prayer was heard.
From out the waters of clear calm I came,
The sun of passion shone on me, and I
Had a new being. Well, I had my day :
My sun hath sunken now : the storm has come :
My strength is passed—my fate, the dragon fly’s.

1891.



HEARTSEASE.



H, Mother Nature, in life's while
 Like to a babe am I,
 Who to thy tender voice and smile
 Is powerless to reply.

What strength I've drawn from out thy breast
 Of softly-rounded hills,
 How oft my spirit, sore opprest,
 With thee hath left its ills !

When I have gone to thee in grief,
 At thought that all must fade,
 Hast thou not shown me each fresh leaf
 Is life from death arrayed !

What time I mourn the fleeting breath
 Of earth's fair flowers, I know
 'Tis from thy voice I learn that death
 Is but a winter snow

Which cloaks us for a little time,
Till in new strength we rise,
In beauty chastened and sublime,
Long nurtur'd 'neath the guise

Of flesh, which hides us as the sheath
Of flowers with covering dun
Wraps in the bloom—as doth a wreath
Of mists obscure the sun.



DISLOYALTY.

[*Written on the occasion of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh's
visit to ——— Station.*]

PULL down the old hut, d'ye say, girls,
That H.R.H. shan't see
The common place that used to do,
Years by, for your mother and me ?

No !—not for a dozen Princes,
Nor lords nor dukes beside,
Will I pull down the poor old hut,
Where your mother lived and died.

Oh, I know that it's old and crazy,
I know that it's shabby and mean ;
But it's going to stand as it is, girls,
And I *won't* erect a screen

To shut out the rambling shingle hut
From sight of this handsome place.
I should feel as if I had closed
The door in your mother's face.

So if H.R.H. don't like that hut
Himself and his lordly pack
May hump their blueys and go their way
Out on the wallaby track.

ANANDA'S DREAM.



HE sun behind the purple mountains sank.
 The Master paused beside a flower-decked tank ;
 Resting beneath a blooming oleander,
 He thus addressed his pupil, young Ananda :
 " My son—of women ever be thou ware ;

Though they are witching, and their faces fair,
 Far from the paths of knowledge do they lead,
 And are the cause of ev'ry great misdeed.

" This charge I give to thee, although I know
 Thy feet in learning's paths are never slow ;
 Yet is thy heart too kind—thy gentle air
 Invites attention from the forward fair."

Much spake the Master. Dreaming on his mat,
 Ananda heard not, for a zealous gnat,
 Leading his eyes towards the flower-decked tank,
 Showed him a vision, which alternate sank


And rose, at first mist-veiled and faint, but soon
 What seemed a lotus opening to the moon
 Showed as an alabaster white-limbed maid,
 In living loveliness of form displayed.
 Her white feet rested on the lotus heart,
 Her lips with honied words beseeemed to part,
 Disclosing gleaming pearls in coral bed ;
 Her arms were clasped behind her shapely head,

Whose tresses dark half-veiled her lovely form :
Thus shines a star through misty clouds of storm.
The Master turned his face—the vision fled.
“ Concerning women,” then he gently said,
“ Thou must not see them.” “ But they *will* be seen,”
Ananda said. The Master smiled serene.
“ Converse not with them, but with bearded men.”
“ But if they speak to me—what, Master, then ?”

“ Keep wide awake, Ananda, watchful be—
If thou resist temptation it will flee.”
“ Master, thy words shall be my conduct's guide,”
The loved disciple said, and softly sighed.
“ Severe the teachings of the Master seem ;
Methinks it would be sweet sometimes to dream,”
Forgotten dust the young Ananda lies,
But still fair visions trouble saintly eyes.



IN THE GARDEN IN THE ROSE TIME.


 ONE, you say, earth's best and brightest,
 So you sigh for days departed,
 And your heart is vexed, for reason
 That you never saw those women
 Who have left their beauty's record
 For the reverent to dream of,
 As a devotee with worship
 Scans the painted missal's border,
 Thinks of the fair thoughts there bodied,
 And then falls into a rapture,
 Knowing how divinely fairer
 Is the presence which inspirèd
 This bright-illum'd pictur'd vision.
 Now the rain has ceased from falling,
 And the sinking sun is piercing
 Through a ragged amber cloud-cloak,
 Will you come into the garden ?
 Do not linger in the porchway,
 For, although the view is lovely,
 'Tis not of the resting city,
 Steeples in the deepening shadows
 Marble white, in mists of sapphire ;
 Not of fields of grain to northward,

Nor yet of the long, broad, shining
Band of flashing grey gulf water ;
Nor of nearer purple hillside,
Where the orange rents scarce hint of
The white freestone lying hidden
In the silent mighty earth-heart ;
Not of spreading mulberry branches ;
Not of drifting foam from olives,
Nor of perfumed boughs of citron,
Nor the bright green of the vineyards.
'Tis of splendid living loved ones
Straying here in scented silence
I would have your mind enchanted.
Here is lang'rous, dark-eyed " Egypt "
Leaning over chaste Nile lilies,
And upon her lips of ruby
See the draught of pearl still lingers.
In this grove of laden lemons
You will find " Egeria " blushing.
Would you care to be Pompilius ?
She has quite a host of lovers.
Do they come to her for counsel ?
Well, perhaps so : I have heard that
Wisdom's words are sweet as honey ;
So, maybe, in getting honey
They may also draw out wisdom.
Here, you see, is " Waltham's Beauty "—
Blushes suit a country maiden ;
Put your face to hers and notice
How the incense of the meadows
Seems to breathe from out her presence.

But this "White Coquette" is scentless—
It is ardour gives the odour—
And all day she dreams of nothing
But to peer into the fountain,
Marv'ling at her wondrous whiteness.
Stooping to the purple spearheads
Of the lavender, thick flowered,
Is "Diana," mighty huntress—
From her bath she has come shining.
Do you fear to gaze upon her,
Lest you be, like bold Actæon,
Blinded by her wrathful beauty?
Down upon the lower terrace,
Whence the peacock harshly calleth,
There is one who pales yet flushes.
I have fancied when the cuckoo
Calls by moonlight in the vineyard,
That the flush became still fainter,
And the pallor of a passion
Which the gods alone dare dream of
Spreads o'er all her marv'lous fairness;
You have guessed her name—yes, "Juno."
See her daughter, blooming "Hebe,"
With her chalice set beside her.
But I weary you with talking,
And your sight is sick of roses;
Still you hunger for the beauty
Of the dead and unforgotten—
These, you say, are only roses.
Well, to-morrow you will wander
Far away, and living women,

Fair as those you have lamented,
Will delight you with their beauty.
Westward, look, the young moon's crescent
Shines, a gracious bow of promise.
Let us wish for pleasant weather,
Which shall speed you on your journey
And will multiply my roses.
Oh, I know that you are laughing,
But I only have my roses,
And I do not like the season
When the wind comes from the northward,
Spoiling all my garden's splendour,
Driving out the glad bird-voices.
You would take a rose flower with you
To remember this fair evening ?
No, I think it would be better
If you did not, for this reason :
In the change of years 'twould alter,
And if you should chance to keep it
It would blurr the gracious image
Of these living, rain-plashed roses.
I would wish that you should keep them
In your mind in all their beauty.
Going ?—well, a pleasant journey.



SEMÈLE.



HE evening primrose lingered late ;
 She hung her head, yet tempted fate—
 Unheedful of the thought was she
 The glory might too awful be
 Of day's imperial god.

“Sun, let me see thee in thy prime,
 Not tempered as at evening time ;
 Come to me as to other flowers,
 With whom thou tarriest in the hours
 Of summer's fervid noon.

“Why should my pallid beauty shine,
 Only when thy bright rays decline ?
 Why should night's dew-dimmed eyes behold
 My fragile leaves of palest gold
 In all their loveliness ? ”

He came, and cast an ardent eye
 On her and on a vane set high—
 At noon in splendour flashed the vane,
 Naught of the primrose there remained
 Save the dead petals, orange stained,
 Upon a dark green stalk.

JILTED.

JILTED—yes, 'tis an ugly word ;
 Yet even so it is better
 Than the sickening sense of hope deferred,
 Waiting each day for a letter—

Waiting in fear lest any should see
 That weary and anxious air.
 He said, "Let our love a secret be,"
 And I, "Do you think I would care

"To tell of our love to anyone ?
 Ah, no ! I will keep it hidden ;
 I only fear that its light, like the sun,
 Will shine on my face unbidden."

But he wrote not a word ; yet day by day
 My foolish heart was so strong
 That I laughed my doubting fears away—
 He would not, he could not stay long.

How shall I tell you, oh, trusting heart !
 That he who vowed love could not die,
 Was only mocking a lover's part—
 Had always been acting a lie.

The silent love we so fondly hid
Together, my heart, you and I,
I do not know any harm it did—
I only know it must die.

It was not a little wanton thing,
To suggest and quicken desire ;
It had not the cunning hand to fling
Passion's flame on a fading fire.


If cherished now it would steal away
The nerve of our body and brain ;
It would woo us out of life's battle fray
To dreams of peace that are vain.

Lay down our love in its grave, my heart,
It's head on its girl-mother's breast ;
A woman now from those dead must part,
Believing what is is best.

1888.



ST. CATHERINE'S VOTARY.

N Ireland, twice two hundred years ago—
 In what especial part I will not say—
 A holy hermit lived. To wrong a foe
 Most deadly, with his knees he'd worn away
 The stones that made to his cold cell the floor.

To him the peasants oft would come and pray
 In his devotions he'd petition for
 Their souls' salvation. Thus, one fine spring day,
 A day when Nature's pulse most swift does beat,
 A damsel came unto the hermit's cell,
 And said, in voice confused yet very sweet—

“O holy father, I can hardly tell
 The thoughts that so torment my troubled mind.”

“Speak on, my daughter, all may yet be well ;
 No ill but Heaven can still some solace find.”

“Thou knowest, father, that my birthday fell
 Upon St. Catherine's Day—thus as my own

Especial saint I've held her ; but I've thought
 Of late, is't right unto one saint alone

To dedicate one's life, and if one ought
 Not rather give to other saints a share

Of one's devotion.” “Daughter, this is naught
 But the 'accursed's' guile—this saintly snare

He spread for thy pure soul, and thou hast sought

Me none too soon. Yet thou shalt learn he lies.

What sayeth Paul of maids? If such abide
They gain more favour under Heaven's eyes."

Then, thinking quite her judgment to decide
By calling vanity to virtue's aid,

The pious hermit told that she who dies
While yet beneath St. Catherine's care a maid
Received a fairer crown. The maid here spied
Her dim reflection in the hermit's brook,

Looked sideways, simpered, blushed again, looked down,
Then with a sigh the image fair forsook,

And looking upward with an angry frown
Said—"Oh, my father, this my only fear,

That when I go with butter to the town
Some bold youth may salute me." "Do not hear

His words," the father urged; "think of the crown."
"I will indeed; 'twill be my only care,

To call upon St. Catherine every hour;
With these bare knees her altar stones I'll wear;

To her I'll dedicate my youth's fair flower,
Her ears shall be assailed with constant prayer

From my untiring lips." "Depart, my child,
The Saints will never let the tempter snare

So strong a zealot. Tranquil, undefiled
From knowledge of the world, thy life shall run."

Our maiden passed from out the hermit's view,
And time passed on until of years just one

Had slipped away since our cold maid did sue
For counsel. "Well I know within a nun's

Secluded cell that modest maid so pure
Eludes the gaze of earth's light-minded sons;

So chaste a maiden could not such endure.”
Thus mused the hermit, when a footfall broke
His meditations. Looking up, his sight
Fell on—no ! yes !—he gave his eyes a poke.

The phantom thus addressed, in accents quite
Confused but sweet replied, meanwhile

She rocked herself and held her bundle tight—
“Oh, holy father ! I have travelled far”—

(Just here the bundle moved and gave a squall)—
The hermit shouted in a frenzy—“Ah !

I trow St. Catherine's steps have naught at all
Worn from them by *thy* knees ; St. Catherine's star
Lost little lustre when thy dull light's flare
Went out. Such votaries as thou but mar

The pure saint's honour, and her fame impair.”
“Oh, holy father,” sobbed the matron, “Deign
To hear my story, of your charity.

Indeed I wished St. Catherine's love to gain,
And I would ne'er have wedded, but you see
That when I went from here to home I fain

Would look within the glass.” “Thus sin begins,”
The hermit murmured. “There I saw quite plain
A crown don't suit me. Won't you bless the twins ?”



TO A WAVE.



HERE were you yesterday? In Gulistan,
 With roses and the frenzied nightingale,
 Rather would I believe you shining ran
 With peaceful floods, where the soft voice
 prevails

Of building doves in lordly trees set high,

Trees which enclose a home where love abides—

His love and hers, a passioned ecstasy ;

Your tone has caught its echo and derides

My joyless lot, as face downpressed I lie

Upon the shifting sand, and hear the reeds

Voicing a thin, dissonant threnody

Unto the cliff and wind-tormented weeds.

As with the faint half-lights of jade toward

The shore you come and show a violet hue,

I wonder if the face of my adored

Was ever held importraited by you.

Ah, no ! if you had seen his face, still prest

Within your hold the picture dear would be,

Like that bright portrait which so moved the breast

Of fairest Gurd with soft unrest that she,

Born in ice halls, she who but raised her eyes

And scornful questioned, “ What is love, indeed ?

None ever viewed it 'neath these northern skies,"
 Seeing the face soon learned love's gentle creed ;
But you hold nothing to be counted dear—
 Only a gift of weed and broken shells ;
Yet I will gather one, so I can hear
 The soft remembrance which still in it dwells :
For in the shell, though broken, ever lies
 The murmur of the sea whence it was torn—
So in a woman's heart there never dies
 The memory of love, though love be gone.



A CERTAINTY.



CANNOT sing of Gulistan,
 Nor fields where icy snow
 Reflect the hues of heaven above.
 I never saw the glow

Of polar lights go flashing high
 Across the heavens' span ;
 I never saw the tropic life
 Where waves the palm's green fan.

The colours of the lichen'd fence,
 The tints of fire-scorched stone,
 The pungent perfume of wild weeds—
 These, these are mine alone.

A FAIR FABLE.



HERE leaned from out the portals of a star
 A spirit-child, and noted that afar
 One world glowed brighter than its princely
 peers.

Thus gazing, from her sight the other spheres,
 The fields of violet ether, passed away,
 And that one world above all worlds held sway.
 While thus all else beside that world had passed
 An angel spoke—"The wheel of life turns fast,
 It whirrs imperious in that world below ;
Thou art the thread to be unwoven now."
 Within his hand a lily undefiled
 The angel bore and gave the spirit-child.
 "Throughout life's journey keep the flower from stain,
 Present it spotless when we meet again."
 Then with the babe he winged his radiant flight
 Down to the world the spirit saw. The night
 From off the spheres now drew her seines away,
 So torn by leaping spoil of night were they.
 'Twas to a southern land the angel flew,
 A land which lies in seas of sapphire hue.
 'Twas earliest morn : only the violet's eyes

Ope'd to a presence lighting earth and skies ;
Only the crickets in the morn-dewed grass
Were conscious that some radiant shape did pass ;
'Twas but a frightened watchful mother-bird
A sweeter singing than her mate's voice heard.
But while the mountains still with mists were dim
A man thanked God a child was born to him.

From vine-draped porchway of her hillside home,
Where bees droned dotingly of dripping comb,
Across a flaming band of poppy flowers
Melissa looked and watched December's hours
Moving in lang'rous splendid pageantry
Unto a flashing turquoise-tinted sea,
Bound by long sweeps of creamy hillocked sand
And purple belts of distant timbered land.

Ceaseless cicadas from the gum-tree boughs
Bemocked the heavy-headed sunflower's drowse ;
Across the dropping sun a shimmering
Of opalescent tints and gauzy wing
Swift passed. Melissa knew the dragon-fly
Bespoke a sudden summer shower. Near by
The jasmine, fainting from the noontime heat,
Strewed scented golden stars about her feet.

Gold in the ripples of Melissa's hair,
Gold in the grass and gold the summer air,
Gold on the wheat and gold the sunset skies,
Golden the colour of the kingcups' eyes,

Golden the dreams of love—she raised her head,
 And saw toward the house a stranger lead
 His horse. He asked a shelter for the night—
 The gold fell on him of the evening light.

* * * * *

The chattering sparrows in the wattles heard
 The stranger's story—but they caught no word
 From out Melissa's lips : they only saw
 A great compassion and a solemn awe—
 Born of the story told—did sudden rise,
 And filled with tenderness her hazel eyes.
 The mantis which among the long grass crept
 Will never tell how sore Melissa wept.

The lizard dreaming on the lichen'd stone
 Will not repeat the whisper—"Nay, alone
 This sullen sorrow thou no more shalt bear,
 My only thought is in thy grief to share."
 The babbling creek which slowly saunter'd by
 Alone had caught the cry of ecstasy
 The stranger uttered ; but from mortal ear
 The secret's safe. "None understand who hear."

* * * * *

Melissa's mother spake—"I dreamed last night,
 Beside our door the lily tall and white
 Was crushed and broken on its bended stalk."
 "Wife," cried her husband fiercely, "cease thy talk ;
 Here is a writing in Melissa's hand—

It tells that she unto another land
 Last night departed with the stranger we
 Sheltered in summer. Hear me : now shall she
 No more be like the sunlight of our age ;
 Hers be the wanton's bitter heritage.
 Gainsay me not : she ousts a living wife
 From out her place. No more, in death or life,
 Shall she ere pass the threshold of my door.
 Deaf would I be unto her prayer ; though for
 One drop of water she should fainting lie,
 These purblind eyes would clear to see her die !”

* * * * *

A dying woman raised her eyes to where
 One star supreme pulsed in the highest air,
 And from the earth her soul was lifted. She
 Passed from the land locked by the sapphire sea
 And as a spirit wandered to where burned
 The star she viewed from earth. “ Life's wheel has
 turned,
 Behold the fabric it has spun,” she cried.
 The gleaming portals ope'd, a silver tide
 Of light streamed out—an angel came and led
 The spirit in. “ Where is the flower ?” he said.
 “ Alas !” she answered, “ in an awful hour,
 Thy words forgotten, I besmirched the flower.
 I saw with grief another's cankering woe,
 And my heart did compassionate him so
 I strove to shield him in the war of life ;
 For she who vowed to aid him—his false wife—
 No longer would his ruined fortunes share,

But left him desolate, o'erwhelmed with care ;
And so I strove, though but in feeble way,
To help him bear the cruel heat of day.
But as I toiled there rose afar and near
The people's voice. They cried, ' In old Judea
Thy kind without the city wall were stoned,
And *then* the sin was counted *unatoned*.'
He sickened ; and in vain I begged for bread :
Stones were the food they offered me instead—
The stones of scorn on both were fiercely rained.
He died. 'Tis with my sin the flower is stained ;
And though oft washed with sorrow's Marah tears,
Still on the flower the crimson stain appears."
" Spirit," the angel said, " wept thou thy sin ?
Was it not rather that thou couldst not win
Garlands of fame the dead man had desired,
And show what lofty aims his soul had fired—
Wouldst not have bartered for the power to wrest
From the cold world a tribute for his breast
Thy hope immortal—to have made life good
To him who perished, dyed the flower with blood ?"
The spirit shook with fear as thus were read
Her inmost thoughts. The angel gently led
Her onward. From her mind there passed away
The thoughts of earth : the star alone held sway.
" The wheel of life spins fine—thy silver cord
Is loosed, but now is needed by the Lord,"
The angel said, " to bind His altar flowers.
Look, where to deck his ivory shrine there towers
A fragrant wealth of lilies chastely white,
Save on the highest flowers a rosy light.

The spirit looked, and softly questioned why
The crowning flowers should bear a crimson dye.
Answered the angel, in a pitying tone,
“Though stained—their purity and fragrance gone—
The gracious God will not refuse a place
Among the lilies which His altar grace,
For they were watered with the blood of those
Who felt compassion for another’s woes.”



AN OLD SORROW.



N Ethiopia on a rock appears

A picture with some hieroglyphics. The hand
That marked them there for some three thousand
years

Has lain as dust ; but words and picture stand
Yet—as a token of a grief which swept

O'er Egypt, sparing not the king's first-born.
There is no record of the ones who wept ;

Still that one sentence—"Set'm'n'pthah"—"Gone
Amongst the gods"—holds in its clasp a grief

So pitiful, though centuries ago
The great destroyer snapped the fair life brief,
Yet has it power to conjure up the woe
Of that old feeble king left desolate,

Of that aged woman mourning for her son.
Perchance some dark-eyed maid of high estate

Wept not less sorely that her tears must run
Unnoticed. Aye, three thousand years have fled

Since that most awful hour on Egypt fell ;
Yet as we read the history by the bed

Of Austral creek, and heard the tinkling, bell-
Voiced water, watched the lizards at their play
On the warm stones beside the Aaron rods,

Which bloomed in memory of a by-gone day,
We dreamt of Seti gone among the gods—
Gone in the morning of his youth, while yet
The dew lay on the flowers about him flung—
We readers westward looked : the sun had set ;
One murmured, "Those the gods love die young."
What dreary years had I been spared if then,
While life was fair, you'd stabbed my light heart
through.
I had not known but you were chief of men,
As I esteemed you—had not known 'twas you
Had dealt the blow : my fair dream undisputed
Had stayed. No need had I to laugh when breath
Seemed torn by sobs. My love, your hand had held
A life eternal, not a living death.



GRATITUDE.



DID I see Susan Jones's gown ?
 I did ; an' more than that,
 I saw the deacon darkly frown
 At Susan Jones's hat.

I also marked young Bosely grin
 As Sue came up the aisle,
 An' she, the hussy steeped in sin !
 Returned to him the smile.

Sister, 'tis really a disgrace
 The way that Susan stares ;
 'Twere better far she hid her face
 And tried to say her prayers.

Oh, yes, I know when we was ill,
 And none would come a-nigh,
 Susannah nussed us both until
 All thought that she would die.

I've not forgot it ; have no fears,
For you shall hear it said
Upon that day when God appears
To judge the quick and dead—

I from my speshul right-hand place
In sweet, angelic tones
Advised the Lord to show some grace
To sinful Susan Jones.

1888.



THE LAND OF BEULAH.

“And the Past, it lies upon the horizon behind us: it is always there, always in sight; and we journey on until we come round to the other side, where the Present and the Past meet.”



Y soul cried out—for she was sore

With journeying in desert plains bare—

“There is nought left. I will not strive—

Life is the mirage in the air.”

And she had drunk the nectar of the gods:

She would not taste of common food;

She longed again for the wild bliss of love,

And nothing else seemed good.

And as we travell'd o'er the waste—

That barren wild, so drear and grey—

My soul would turn and strain her eyes

To the oasis that faintly lay

On the horizon and ne'er missed her view,

But met her gaze when she would turn

And make as to retrace her steps,

I crying, “Fool, canst thou not learn

It is the land of Past; canst thou not see

Its barrèd golden gate,

'Gainst which thou fain would beat

For entrance all importunate?

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That for one fleeting hour thou, fool, might drink again
That little cup of pleasure gone, all reckless of the pain,
The grey, vast emptiness of after-life—

The sick'ning heart that loathes the worldly strife
With ten times greater loathing than before,
When Memory, all too fond, unbarred the door,
And she, my soul, sobbed out aloud, crying, "It
would be sweet

In that fair land's cool streams once more to bathe my
weary feet."

But I said, "Oh ! my soul, life and the day are meant
For work, death and the night for dreams.

Up, up and gird thee for the strife ; forget

That pleasant land of Past, its palms and streams
Forget." She queried low—"Nay, nay, that cannot
be—

That land and all its memories is a part of me ;
And in the watches of the night its songs, so wondrous
sweet

With youth and love and hope, I'll sing to thee !"

"Sing on, O soul !" I cried. "Sing of that never-
failing Past


Until, with aching, eager feet,

We stand (the thorny desert trod) where Past and
Present meet,

The barrèd gate of thy land of Beulah opes,
Thou, entering, find'st it wholly sweet."

A REASONABLE WOMAN :

A BACHELOR'S DEFINITION.

 HE must not reason that her breast
 My only rest should be,
 But wisely notice last year's nest
 Hangs empty on the tree.

She must not reason that each hour
 Her power alone should know ;
 She must remark the snowdrop flower
 Each year beholds fresh snow.

She must not reason that her lips
 Eclipse all other pair—
 The roving bee from each flower sips,
 And still seeks fresher fare.

'Twould not be reason if her mind
 Unkind accounted me,
 Or mourned that like the fickle wind
 I hither, thither flee :

I reason that the splendid sun
 For none *alone* doth rise,
 But ere his brilliant day is done
 Delights each mortal's eyes.

MORIALTA :

SONG OF THE WATERFALL.



AMONG the plumèd ti-tree grey,
 With silver feet it takes its way,
 Gems fern and moss with diamond spray,
 And in the night—grown tired with play—
 Croons in its sleep a softer lay

That holdeth more of grave than gay.
 What is it that its sweet voice calls,
 Fast foaming o'er its rocky walls ?

By day it sings—"The wild bees hum
 Among full-scented flowers
 Of yellow wattle and grim gum,
 And in the early hours
 The bright birds to my waters come ;
 From feathery ti-tree bowers
 There rises the insistent thrum
 Of insects Nature dowers
 With but one note—no punishment :
 From their imperfect instrument
 They praise the Giver in content."

By day it sings—"The sun looks down ;
In my dark pools of shade,
What were cold, black—warm, golden, brown
Delicious deeps are made.
Lower, where orange rocks fierce frown,
No rays of light invade
The pools beneath. On their high crown
The warm glow lies delayed ;
From dark-eyed mint the rush uprears
Her head and, as in bygone years,
Whispers—"A king hath ass's ears." "

By day it sings—"Kooyanahs chide,
And with loud laughter mock ;
They scare the timid fish which glide
Around my grey-brown rock,
Lichen-beveiled by Time's swift tide
And fringed by fern and dock,
Beneath whose leaves the breezes hide,
Make shadows interlock,
And fright the yabbi as he crawls
Backwards and home to muddy halls
Where never ray of sunlight falls."

At eve it sings—"The lilac throws
To me her amethyst ;
From out my clear and shallow flows
Pactolean hues are kissed
By buttercups, which eager pose,
Their riches to insist


Upon my breast, where tints of rose
Mingle with evening's mist—
While from the dark'ning woods there rise,
Flooding with sweetness earth and skies,
Kooraka's liquid melodies."

By night it sings a sadder tune :
It murmurs that the wan-faced moon
Within it viewed herself and fled
To cloud tents, leaving drear and dread
The mourning water, the tall trees
Which writhe and shiver in the breeze.
The she-oak whispers of her fears,
The black-boy* shakes a thousand spears ;
Up the gully come the eerie
Cries of curlews "weeping weary."
Such the song its soft voice calls,
Foaming o'er its rocky walls ;
Never doth the singing falter—
Ever-flowing Morialta !

* A native plant.



TO MARGARET.


 THROUGH vines despoiled flies March with
 drooping wings,
 And in the night insistently there sings
 The fierce east wind, born of deep-gullied hills,
 A thin-voiced melody of shrunken rills,
 Which their diminished silver scarcely show,
 Among the weeds and rushes in their flow.
 Soon will their fuller waters leaping run
 O'er the bright image of an autumn sun,
 As on that happy day when we two strolled
 Up vineyard slopes, oft lingering to behold
 The lovely tints which Autumn's hand had spread
 Upon their leaves—soft brown and gold and red.
 Would it console me now if these weak feet
 Could pass from out this city's stifling heat,
 And on that dry-grassed hill-side walk again,
 Thus bringing to my view the fair broad plain,
 Where in a purple haze the city lay,
 And the bright water of the distant bay,
 Which as a flashing zone of sapphire prest
 Against the glowing turquoise of the west.
 It might be well with me, but I half doubt
 If all that fairness would seem fair without
 You, who like some wilful child that day

Gathered my love to cast it tired away.
With you 'tis March. With shining eyes he waits
Around your sea-girt castle, and the gates
Oft clang beneath his fierce, keen, gripping breath,
Which blows from polar seas, and tells of death
Which came to many in the starless night
On barren capes, where jagged rocks bit white
The leaden waves which rolled into their jaws
The fated ships, which sail to port no more,
But like to tortured spectres anguished lie
Beneath the gloom of Hebridean sky.
Ofttimes by this wild breath of March are blown
Flecks of foam whiteness to your doors of stone,
Deep set within stained walls of Norman time,
And hoar with centuries of ocean's rime.
Yet, while the tumult of the storm is high
You know the gracious April soon will hie
To sheltered hollows of the farther land,
And there will raise a shining jewelled band
Of flowers to glad the grimness of your home.
Haply some morning, when the springtide's ray
Brings warmer tinges to your walls of grey,
And waves which March gave but a leaden hue
Are changed to opals trembling green and blue,
You may look out from those deep walls across
The sea and mark a bird pursue its course,
Cleaving the clear air with its wings of white:
'Tis some fair thought of mine which in the night
Was by thee, but in daylight has no part,
And so wings home unto my darkened heart.

THE DREAM OF SENSE.



SLEEP came to me and kissed me on the lips,
 Saying, "In lands of dreams find thou thy love."
 I sought my love where swaying grasses bent
 And softly sighed a song of solitude along
 Their surface, wimpled by the scented wind.

I sought my love where golden spans of light
 Fell quivering between the parted stalks,
 Showing the nests of peaceful brooding birds.
 I did not seek her through the sombre pines
 That waved their perfumed tassels in the air
 And wept pale amber tears of balm, as though
 To ease their giant hearts of grief, which moaned
 For ever in their drear sepulchral plumes ;
 For there is naught of sorrow with my love.
 I passed to where the silken poppies bloomed,
 And every flower was a warm, red mouth
 To kiss my body as I pressed among
 The vermeil depths to fields of marigolds,
 Where Hymen, in a garment of their hue,
 Half-raised upon his elbow his fair form
 And waved his torch—the flowers turned to gold,
 And every flower became a golden tress,
 To bind the hearts of men in nuptial joys.

But from these silken meshes I went on
And fell upon a bed of violets.
Each violet held a glittering drop of dew,
And in their amethystine crystal wells
Pictured I saw the face of her I sought.
There is no thought of sorrow with my love,
And so I sought her not where flew the veil
Of the white water-elf which leaped the rocks ;
For though o'erhead a thousand shining gems
Sprang high in air, her footsteps fell in shade.
Still went I onward. Now through tropic woods,
Where forms of brilliant insects and bright birds
Brought to my mind conceits of rare device
Wherewith to deck the robes of my beloved,
I came to where long fields of lilies lulled
In ivory bells the downy, dusky bees.
“These are the whiteness of her circling arms,”
I cried ; “and this low lullaby a tune
Of Love’s device to sooth the mind to sleep.
Oh ! I am sad ; I cannot find my love.”
Next, in a palace built of fretted stone,
I passed into a hall with jasper paved,
And onward to a chamber lined with shells
Of Nautilus and those called “Venus’ Ears,”
Which cast o’er all the room a moonlight gleam.
The domèd ivory ceiling was upheld
By alabaster columns, which were draped
With silk of creamy hue, thick sown with pearls ;
And all adown the centre there were set
Large silver baskets filled with pure white flowers—
Pure was the chamber as a vestal bower.

But yet I found her not, and still went on,
Down marble terraces where peacocks stalked,
While champac flowers and roses balmed the air
And bright fish leaped from lotus-covered tanks.
I sought her under trees, where mottled light
Fell on a stream ; and there a fragile boat
Was moored among the bulrushes' tall spears.
" Drift me, O boat ! unto my love," I cried,
" For I have naught but sorrow without love."
I stood within the boat : it did not drift,
But sped with rapid progress, as though oared
By strong and skilful hands invisible,
And up against my vision sloped wide lawns.
With slower motion drifted now the boat
Until it rested by a flowery bank.
Upon the height a stately mansion rose
And gardens all abloom with summer flowers.
Upon the grassy turf beneath the trees
Danced damsels, on whose shapely limbs were scarves
Woven by elfin hands from rainbow mists.
Were they of human birth, these milk-white maids ?
They spoke in human language, for one came
Adown the lawn unto the water's edge,
And, leaning from the bank above, her eyes
Held mine as when the panther's fiery glance
Falls on its victim ere it leaps to kill.
Between me and the red west sun she waved
Her hand : I marked the palm rose stained,
And through her slender fingers seemed to see
The glow of her young pulsing ruby blood,
And from her coral mouth caressing words

She whispered low. Her fragrant breath
Perfumed the air as when October's sun
Lies in the red rose heart at Austral noon.
Her amber hair was crowned with scarlet buds
Of the pomegranate ; and as her silken robes
Caught the fast fleeting sunlight's saffron hue
She seemed to float in weft of golden haze.
As thus she stood on the o'erhanging bank,
Her arms outstretched, she spoke in passion'd tones—
“ Oh, my beloved, for thee I've waited long ;
Within my palace walls the feast is spread,
The guests are met, the flower-crowned damsels tune
Their golden harps to sweetest melody,
And every joy that youth or love desire
Await thee in my palace of delight.”
With luring looks, and words whose passion thrilled
Through all her voice, she thus entreated me.
I rose to join her—but a sudden wind
Ruffled the water, and the boat now rocked
From side to side, and in my ear a voice
Low whispered, “ Look behind the palace gates ; ”
And straitway grinning from behind the bars
I shuddering saw death's gruesome, eyeless head,
And foul disease fluttered in filthy rags.
Upon the bank stood wanton forms, rose-crown'd,
But as I looked the roses turned to dust.
With trembling hands I strove to urge the boat,
But it moved not. “ Oh, aid me, love ! ” I cried ;
Then as it sped, faint and still fainter grew
The wanton's voice : “ Go, sorry lover, go—
In sorrow's haunts go seek and find thy love.”


I passed by marshes where the dank mists lay,
And cries of birds were doleful on the night,
And hideous bats in countless numbers flew ;
The waves were inky black, save when some fish
Rose to the surface and a lurid glare
Of phosphorescent light flashed round the boat.
At last night fled, and as the dawn arose
Swiftly the presence of the new-born light
Scared the dread forms and poisonous mists away.
A breeze sprang up : I sailed upon a sea
Lashed by the fury of a ceaseless storm ;
Loud roared the thunder, and sharp-frozen rain
Fell in the boat, which seemed as though 'twould sink.
On, on, sailed I : the day gave place to night,
And night to day, and day to night again.
Then came a calm, and in a violet sky
Shone like some blessed spirit evening's star.
With eyes upraised my weary soul cried out—
“ Oh, Star of Love ! be thou henceforth my guide ; ”
Nor let me wander from its light serene.
Fierce shines the flame upon the flower-strewn path
Which lures unthinking youth to sin's abode ;
And sin is sorrow, therefore shall no stain
Of sin rest on me when I find my love.
At length one afternoon I came to where
The sea was flecked with flocks of snow-white gulls ;
Northward they flew, and northward sailed the boat ;
And now I floated by a frozen shore ;
All shapes most marvellous and rare were there,
Frozen to silence in that ice-bound world :
The giant mastodon, whose tread made quake

The primal forests where our fathers walked ;
Ships that had sailed from busy ports where men
Thronged on their wharves and bartered in their marts
There stranded lay, so thickly crusted o'er
With shining ice they seemed like ships of glass
Which children treasure as a costly toy.
Still northward flew the gulls, and still the boat
Kept in their track ; at length the frozen sea
Was rent in twain, and through the yawning cleft
The gulls went on, and after them the boat
Now came into a haven where the sea
Was blue as Austral skies in summer time ;
And through the waters I looked down and saw
On golden sands a million pearly shells.
And now the boat had reached a sheltered cove
Where coral rocks begirt an emerald sea,
And as I leaped upon the shining sand
I saw a palace of chalcedony,
And from its portals, oh ! my love ! my love !
Thou cam'st to meet me, clad in robes of white,
Which fell in long straight folds unto thy feet,
And as a cloak of overlying gold
Shone thy rich wealth of amber flowing hair,
Starred with white flowers of scented jessamine,
Pure as a vision of a soul assoiled,
With lips that trembled and with voice that held
A thought of tears from overwealth of joy,
Questioned—" Art very weary with thy journey, love ?"
Then drew me in, with gentle, clinging hands,
Through the wide portal to an inner room—
'Twas hung with snowy skins of polar bears,

The floor was carpeted with down of grebe,
Upon the glowing hearth there burnt the flame
Of sacred scented wood. Thus passion's fire
Burns in a chamber where the love is pure,
Though not the less intense ; and as she prest
Her lips on mine, with sweet content I found
There was no thought of sorrow with my love.



B——'S LETTER.

 AND so you're married ! Well, I hope
 Your wife will prove a crown :
 As I have drunk your wine, I don't
 Grudge her the lees. Don't frown,

And think I do not mourn your loss
 Because I laughing rhyme :
 You know you said I laughed too much
 In that dear by-gone time.

And I have not the faintest doubt
 When dead a verse or so
 Will by my giggling ghost be sent
 To next world's *Figaro*,

Descriptive of my funeral
 And of my mourning kin,
 And how I looked and what I wore—
 I hope they'll put it in,

Not send it back declined with thanks,
As being little worth ;
My verse would then meet just the fate
Its author met on earth.

Good-bye, my dear—we'll always be
The very best of friends,
Although we are not like to meet ;
And here my letter ends.

No—I must add a postscript on,
Or else I were no she.
'Tis this—how lucky that her name
Like mine begins with B.

The graven ring, the lettered purse,
And the initialled brooch
Of course will do as well for her.
Your thrift is no reproach,

But when I think of how you vowed
To die for my dear sake,
And how you proved the vow, oh ! Ted,
I laugh until I ache.



DOT CONFIDES TO A FRIEND.



WONDER what's a riginal?

When I came in to search

For Dolly, Jack knelt on the floor ;

He wasn't acting church,

Because he hadn't got a book—

No, he was kneeling, Tot,

Just where you stand, and praying hard

Like I do when I've got

A great big want for something nice.

Nurse says one's always heard,

And so one is—you know I prayed

For my canary bird.

Miss Blythe was hearing Jack his prayers—

She's friends with aunty May—

And as I crept up close I heard

Just what Jack had to say.

It wasn't real proper prayers ;

He showed his photo. : " Nell,

Take this and take the '*riginal*'

Unto your heart as well,"

He said ; but Nellie laughed and stared,

And then she ran away.

I'll never laugh or stare like that
If folks to me should pray
Upon their knees when I grow big—
Hark ! there's nurse calling, dear !
It's dreadful stupid being small—
I'll sham I did not hear.
See, Jack has torn his photo. up
And left it on the floor.
Now listen, Tottie : long ago—
Oh, months and months before
I was as tall as I am now—
A person who could dance
Through hoops on horseback wrote to Jack—
She came, I think, from France.
I know she had "resigns" on Jack,
Because mamma said so
To Mrs. Montmorency Jinks—
I overheard, you know.
Papa had opened, by mistake,
The letter. Oh, my stars !
When he is cross you never heard
A voice so gruff as pa's !
And I remember that same night
Jack sat beside my bed
And said—"Sis, life's a hollow sham ;
I wish that I was dead."
And, now I think of it, Jack's eyes
Were red, as could be seen.
"Perhaps he'd cried," you say ; oh, no !
He's old—he's just nineteen ;
But still, if he should come and sit

Beside my bed to-night,
I'll put my arms tight round his neck,
And tell—'twill serve her right—
That Nellie Blythe's a nasty thing
(She pinched me on the stairs),
And ain't the proper sort of girl
To hear a man *his* prayers.



DOT AIDS THE FAMILY FORTUNES.

LOO'S writing—at least, so she said—
 She's not doing any such thing ;
 She's crying, and laying her head
 On a dress that she wore in the spring.
 I s'pose she feels bad it's worn out ;

It was very pretty when new,
 And suited her, there was no doubt,
 For Harry Legoe said so, too,
 When he took me and Loo for a row ;

And I say, now wasn't it queer,
 When at home he was "Mr. Legoe,"
 She "Miss Lulu ;" but there it was "dear"
 And "darling" he called her, and she

Called him Harry—she spoke very low,
 But I heard her ; ma says of me

I can hear the grass growing—and so
 When we came home to tea I asked why
 They didn't speak kind, as they'd done
 In the boat ; but I s'pose they were shy,

For Loo blushed, Hal looked cross ; ma said, "Run
 Away to your nurse, Dot, it's late !"

I say, do you know Tottie East ?
 She's dreadfully ugly. I hate
 The horrid, long-eared little beast.

She pretended she peeped at the door
Where her brother and Hal Legoe smoked,
And she told me Hal said, "Would the law
Allowed 'quisitive brats to be choked ;
That he called me an imp, and was sure
If I didn't by good luck die young
'Twas hanging alone that would cure
My terrible rattle-trap tongue."
Did you ever ! Of course every word
That minx had made up, but the smack
I gave her will make what she's heard
Sound nicer next time it's brought back.
I know why you've come here. Aunt Bess
Told ma that she knew you'd propose
For Loo, and she'd jump and say "Yes"
If she'd got any sense ; but Loo rose
And marched like a queen to her room,
And when I peeped in through a crack
And told her you'd come—well, a tomb
Might have looked just as gloomy and black.
Aunt Bess said you'd horses and traps,
And moved in the very first set,
And Loo would not ever, perhaps,
Such another good 'stablishment get.
But, you see, she likes Harry Legoe—
He is poor, but so handsome and tall.
What makes you so freckled ? D'ye know,
I didn't think you were so small
Till you got up from out of your chair ;
You look taller—how queer !—sitting down,
Like Spitz when he begs—he's a rare

And wonderful dog, so don't frown
Because I compare you to him.

It isn't your fault you're so plain ;
But what made them christen you Tim ?

It's so ugly. Just look at the rain !
Oh, it's only a shower. What say ?

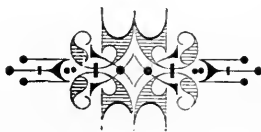
Will I get you some ink and a pen ?
Yes, here they are both in this tray,

And here is some paper. Now then,
Write away. Will I take this to Loo ?

But she's coming ; I hear her below.
Pooh ! I can write better than you.

(Peeps over his shoulder)—

“ Good-bye, and good luck to Legoe.”



THE WILL O' THE LORD.



N' so it's the will o' the Lord
 That I should be settin' here
 Stone blind, an' mighty onsartin
 Concerning the things I hear.

What good hez it done to the Lord?
 That's jist what I'd like to know.
 Stay where ye are awhile, Deacon,
 'Taint time for yer yet to go.

'Twas the will o' the Lord when Jenks
 Got his death from gangren'd leg,
 An' the widder and kids, pore things,
 Had their chice to starve or beg.

'Twas the will o' the Lord when Ben,
 Ez walked with Matildy White,
 Was drowned in a sudden squall
 Rightways in his sweetheart's sight.

I s'pose as her heart was hardened—
 Leastways that's what people said—
 For she kind o' sickened an' paled,
 And bout'n a year was dead.

I get through a heap o' thinkin',
Sot like a stone in my cheer—
Ain't it never struck you, Deacon,
Ez being a trifle queer ?

When the Lord was here on earth
He raised up the widow's son,
Woke the Centurion's daughter,
An' aided each suffering one.

But now as He's gone to heaven
It seems as if there's a change—
Hez it never 'peared to you, Deacon,
As being a little strange ?

'Tis the will o' man is to blame
Most often when things go amiss ;
Drouhts an' disease the will o' the Lord ?
You lie, for it never is.

The will o' the Lord ain't agues,
Nor the will o' the Lord ain't sprains—
Half the time yer will o' the Lord
Is shiftlessness an' drains.



DESTINY.

FOR THE FIRST TIME

FAR in a mountain pool a stream is born ;
Below lie barren plains, which might grow corn
And bless the world could they but feel the
cool,
Clear touch of water from the mountain pool ;
But they stay barren, hidden from the sheen
Of that bright beck. High rocks rise up between,
And send the water, mad with baffled force,
Back on itself, to break another course,
Where swirling drift and naked boulders show
The senseless fury of the raging flow.

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Far north of Brisbane lives a man who prays—
 “ Oh, Lord ! deliver me from nights and days
 When reason totters.” In her Melbourne home
 A girl sits listless, whiter-faced than foam ;
 What time I view her wintry smile’s rare beam
 I ponder on the plains, the rock, the stream.

A VOICE FROM THE BACK BLOCKS.

 DO not know why I am writing,
 But I feel I must take up the pen.
 I think that just now I was dreaming :
 I thought Lily was here, and then, then
 The days of the old time came back,
 And I fancied once more she was mine,
 As she promised that night at the ball,
 When, dressed in a colour like wine,
 Which is amber with light running through,
 She lifted her dark eyes and said,
 " Whatever may happen I'm yours,
 • Remember that's certain, dear Ted."
 How often I see her in dreams,
 How often the fair words came back.
 It's only a couple of years
 Since the Blankinton's ball in Toorak—
 It's not a long time to a man
 Who knows that the world will go well,
 But when fortune and hope too are gone
 It seems like the ages of hell.
 Set here in the back blocks for good
 (I was ruined a week from that ball),
 I wonder how long I shall stand
 These lively reflections—that's all.

AUNT ROSE'S STORY.



YOU want to know where I found it—
 In the lumber room to-day,
 There in that casket of ebon
 This small faded gauntlet lay.

Is there a story about it ?
 Well, somehow that gauntlet small
 Brings to my fanciful vision
 A figure not very tall.

Eyes blue as the skies above her,
 Curls of a golden hue,
 And the face of a handsome lover
 Swearing that he'd be as true

As the scent of the rose to the rose is,
 And laughing her fears away ;
 Why, do you ask, was she frightened ?
 Well, perhaps she feared—some day—

But she put the harsh thought from her ;
His kiss on the gauntlet fell—
You call this a “stupid story ;”
Yes, it seems but little to *tell*.

And you say the shabby old glove
Is stained—do I think from tears ?
Perhaps 'twas the dew of a rose, dear,
That withered in by-gone years.

Child : “ Yes, it's a stupid story ;
Tell of a Prince who was true,
And married a beautiful Princess—
Why, auntie, the glove fits you ! ”



THE THEOSOPHIST :

A VISION.



NE Sunday to me was accorded
 A dream of most wonderful import :
 A voice mourned full sore in my visions,
 " Alas ! the munificent threepence
 No more to the plate of collection
 Slides gently." No more do the volleys
 Of halfpence on drums of the Army
 With promptitude rattle. The sinner
 No more from the bench of repentance
 With fervour proclaimeth his errors.
 No saints from the " Ark of Salvation "
 With unction relate their emotions ;
 The tambourines lie in the Barracks,
 The cornet the wind breathes on only.
 Aye, even in high church assemblies
 The incense, intoning, and vestments
 Are useless to stay the defaulters ;
 The bishop, the chaplain, and curates
 Have only each other to preach to.
 Of verity here are the shepherds :
 The question is—" Where have the flocks gone ?

Methought in my wonderful vision
 Another voice answered—"Dost know not?
 A mystical new incarnation
 Of H. P. Blavatsky at present
 Attracteth the people to H——t-street.
 He of old time yclept T. R. Forest
 Yearned long for a true revelation,
 So unto the heart which was ready
 The Manas of H. P. Blavatsky
 Then entered through visible Rupa
 To wax and develop in Buddhi—
 Watched over and guarded by Atma,
 Then pass to Arupa Devachan."
 Methought in my vision to H——t-street
 I went, and lo! round me were thousands
 Proclaiming aloud to each other
 The gifts of the new incarnation:
 He hath knowledge surpassing the Kishis;
 Mandana, Dharani, and Siddhi
 Are known unto him—aye, Samadhi
 Been practised, fourth Jhani attained,
 Abhinna and Iddhi acquired;
 'Tis said that by rote he repeateth
 The Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana.
 "Salaam to the wondrous Asekha!"
 I lifted mine eyes—I beheld him
 An instant appear at a window.
 He waved both his hands to the people
 And said, in a voice sweet and solemn—
 "I reckon it's just about lunch time:
 In kindness make way for the person

Who bringeth my tray from the bakehouse.
Mine hostess to cook is unable :
The oven's been taken for relics,
Likewise my new pair of goloshes.
Such conduct I like not, my people ;
But I will procure me some others,
And will not reprove your devotion.”
Then changed was the scene of my vision :
I wandered by fair, limpid Torrens ;
'Twas night, and a small band of persons
Stole silently down through the darkness.
The first of the band bore a burden
That brought to my mind a remembrance
Of Constantinople : the Bosph'rus,
Not Torrens, seemed present. I long looked—
I shuddered. When giddy Sultanas
Unlimited leave were accorded
The awe-struck beholders were 'ware of
Like solemn processions, like burdens,
Sacked, silent, suggestive, and shapeless.
Oh, horror ! my pen cannot write it—
The artist has tried to portray what
Dread deed was next instant committed :
A horrible splash loudly sounded,
A coarse voice in triumph proclaimed—
“ We've settled the great Tirthakara :
I guess that theosophy's done for :
The Church and Army have henceforth
A bond of inviolate union.”

BOB'S DREAM.

BOB had a dream—'twas very strange :
 He thought o'er all the world a change
 Had come of great diversity :
 When girls went fishing men were caught,
 And asses, not professors, taught
 Within each university.

Alonzo He-Haw, who'd a class
 Of ladies, kissed one—that bad ass
 Resembled *no professor*.
 The senate rightly ruled 'twas wrong,
 And coming things a deal too strong,
 So punished the transgressor.

He'd bring perdition on our shes,
 They said, and quoted Heloise,
 That hussy who "went on so."
 An older ass they next engaged
 In place of him who'd so outraged
 Their morals—one Alphonso.

(The rhyme of Phonso's not my own,
Nor yet is "on so," but condone
The theft, O shade of Byron !)
A naughty dream it was, forsooth,
The dreamer was a giddy youth
Whose rest bad thoughts environ.

When Bob awoke with aching head
In tones repentant thus he said—
"This comes of last night's fun,
Of whisky, fizz, and bitter beer—
'Tis plain the mixture made me queer
To dream as I have done."

He vowed no more the drinks he'd broach
Which caused such dreams and cast reproach
On grave professors. Ah !
He's taken to himself a wife,
He leads a quiet, sober life,
They live with her *mamma*.



NIGHTFALL IN THE VINEYARD IN JUNE.



UT in the vineyard, where the moonlight falls
 Through pearly mists which trail o'er leafless
 vines,
 Is it alone the fretful mopoke calls—
 Is it alone that pallid moon refines
 The scenes of day to this enchanted land ?
 Is there not, rather, some magician's wand
 And voice upraised in incantation strange ?

Each bare-branched vine, by day of ruddy hue,
 Now, touched by breath of evening moist and chill,
 Glimmers like rusted iron wet with dew.

Each gum and wattle on the nearer hill
 Is now a sable, velvet-covered form ;
 And northward, clouds, the advent of a storm,
 Throw darker shadows o'er the purple range.

ON A CHINESE FAN.



ONCE in the by-gone years I owned a fan
 Whereon an almond-eyed, much-painted maid
 Leered at two mandarins of high degree
 Who leaned in postures stiff against the moon.
 It was a marvellous fan—or so I thought
 When in my childish days my great delight
 Was to unfurl the scented, silken toy,
 And in the wondrous forms portrayed thereon
 To dream bright visions where I played a part.
 Then lived I in the palace of Pekin,
 Rode forth, ensconced with pomp, in palanquin,
 Inhaled the fragrance of the “Feast of Flowers,”
 Fed on rare food from bowls of jewelled gold,
 And drank Pekoe from cups of egg-shell ware.
 Sometimes a hideous dragon crossed my path,
 But I was always rescued by a prince.
 There is no doubt that *was* a marv’lous fan,
 But from it all its magic long has fled,
 For when I wave it nowadays I see
 Nought of these marvels—ah ! I have grown old.

THE BOWL OF LIFE.

Jove fashioned the bowl of life with a stone brim, crystal sides, and a golden base. "'Tis a coarse draught," said he, "and only the lusty will find the gold."



HE nun looked out from her chill cell lone,
And a cheerless draught she took
From an ancient cup of wrinkled stone
That was filled from the frost-bound brook.

The matron sat with her children near,
And with gratitude sad to see
She sipped a glass of the smallest beer,
While her lord drank *eau de vie*.

A girl laughed loud from a doorway dim—
The door had a rose above :
The bowl of life is full to the brim
With the crimson wine of love.

FROM AN ALMOND ORCHARD.



'ERHEAD a world of almond snow,
 Beneath are grassy hollows, '
 And o'er their emerald to and fro
 Dart purple-vested swallows.

Sometimes the wrens like sapphires flit
 Adown the flower'd expanses,
 Sometimes the robin comes to twit
 The rabbit as it dances.

Sometimes above the honied fume
 A hawk goes slowly sailing,
 Then veering slantwise flecks the spume
 Of rain-clouds eastward trailing.

At night between the foamy bars
 Of flower-flecked interlacings
 The shining throng of pulsing stars
 Make cabalistic tracings.

And while the west winds softly sigh
The dreamer lies and listens ;
It is to dreamers such as I
That every star which glistens

In the deep violet vault of night
Is an assured token
There is a power which works to light—
A force for aye unbroken.



FROM CONVENT WALLS.

MADAME — TO THE KING.



OME once again—again that I may see
 If I remember rightly thy fair face ;
 My tortured heart but wails and cries to me,
 “ Thou hast forgot his noble, god-like grace.”
 Ah, the long years ! how slowly have they
 dragged

Their length across my weary, weary life ;
 It is not years, 'tis centuries, have lagged
 Since that dear day I ceased to be true wife.

Louis, my love, my king, come once again,
 Again enfold me in thy sheltering arms ;
 At thy first kiss I will forget all pain
 And be assoiled of grievous earthly harms.
 Love, thou art more to me than hopes of heaven ;
 Love, thou art more to me than thoughts of God.
 This is my fate : from out thy presence driven
 To crouch beneath that outraged heaven's rod.

Yet come again : I'll forfeit hope of grace
 Earned by long years of penance and of prayer—
For one brief hour to gaze upon thy face,
 The powers of heaven—aye, hell itself—I'll dare.
Come once again to me, the lowest thing
 On earth—a woman without shame or fame—
And yet far prouder than the heaven's King
 If thou but call me by the old sweet name.



MINTHE.



H ! she has placed me here so thou can'st never
come to me—

Our hours of joy are dead, and this cold stream
chills thoughts of thee

And memory of our love. I dream of thee
and wake to hear

The croak of frogs, which cry “Lost ! lost !”—the plash
of water drear.

I dream, and the remembrance of thy love pervades
My being, though so changed ; and for Tartarean shades
I hunger still. I dream I hear thy feet pass o'er the
meads :

Alas ! it is the wind which sighs and strays among the
reeds.

I dream of thee and tremble, panting, frenzied with thy
kiss :


I wake—it is a dead leaf smites me from weird trees
that hiss

And groan in anguished accents, as their withered arms
are tossed,

“Gone is thy lover, Minthe—aye, lost ! for ever lost !”

DREAMS.

To —


 MAY joy be with thee through the length of
 years,
 And mem'ry hide from me the barren waste
 Of days apart—by cheating mirage placed
 Along the road which I now tread alone
 And dream I dream, in dreaming thee mine own.
 My life had been more grey had'st thou not come :
 Blame not thyself—thy fancy could not stay.
 When mem'ry's mirage cheats and cheers my way
 I'll journey dreaming I am not alone,
 And dream I dream not, dreaming thee mine own.

WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN.




ONCE again through the years that are dead
 Must thy weary feet, O spirit, tread :
 It seems as though 'twas this single thread
 Of memory held the soul within
 Thy tenement, grown so wan and thin.


For ever and evermore, poor soul,
 Must thy feet still press to the glit'ring goal,
 Thy lips still thirst for the golden bowl,
 The waters of which have long since dried.
 Pray for a little shade to hide

Thee from the pitiless world's hard stare,
 To shield thee, fainting in noonday glare—
 A breath to cool the quivering air.
 O for the dead heart that called thee queen,
 And the lovely lives that might have been !

LOVE'S REQUIEM.

AMENT for Love, where none may hear ;
Lay passion-flowers above his bier,
And let the sad sweet wind that strays
Among the flowers these summer days
Sigh as his requiem.

THE FIRST TREASON.


 OD, who dwellest apart
 Far from the works of Thine hand,
 Unheeding the toiler's smart,
 Heedless of scorching brand
 Of sin, which seethes to the core
 Of the self-abhorring flesh,
 For ever and evermore
 Wilt Thou draw Man in the mesh
 Of Thy creative power,
 Casting him into a world,
 Where, from his natal hour,
 He as a straw is whirled
 In eddies of pain and fear
 On the current of life along?
 Is the sight of woe so dear?
 Will nothing appease the wrong—
 The wrong that Thy creature wrought?
 Is the pain of the Christ who died
 No salve to Thy wounded pride?
 Is a human heartache nought?

GOD'S HARVEST FIELD.



WALKED within the harvest field,
 And clearly from the farm
 A voice came chiding—"He who reaped
 The corn must stack the haulm."

I walked within the busy town :
 A woman passed forlorn ;
 She moaned—"Unheeded is the haulm
 When stolen is the corn."

Outstretched at corners of the streets
 I viewed the beggar's palm,
 And heard him whining—"One man reaps
 The corn and one the haulm."

I went into a crowded church :
 The people raised a psalm
 Of praise to God that one man reaped
 The corn and one the haulm.

I thought, When judgment day shall come,
And in that awful, calm,
Majestic presence of the Lord
Stand they who corn and haulm

Have sep'rate reaped upon the earth,
And in high tones of scorn
An angel chanteth, "These men reaped
The haulm and those the corn,"

The dreadful voice of the Most High
Will to proud hearts bring awe,
Asking, "Why did ye keep the corn,
And give these men the straw ?

"Depart from me, accursèd ones,
Your living souls to save
By penance long. My harvest fields
I unto all men gave."

The man who grinds the poor, himself
Into God's mills shall fall :
"The mills of God grind very slow,
They grind exceeding small."

A DREAM OF DAWN.



It is the time when shrill Alectryon's voice
Rings o'er the plains and through the sounding
hills.

It is the time the ghostly form of Dawn
Steals through the open door and falleth faint

Against the wall, spent with her journey through
The ranks of night. In what accord is that
Pale ghostly light and that shrill clarion cry?
All light and sight have correlating sound:
Mark when the sun his golden head uprears
Over the eastern hills, what mellow throats
From out the shadowed gullies' scented depths
Pour forth their melody to greet his rays.
When high at noon the sun rules heaven supreme,
A silence reigns. Silence is sound which sleeps.
As evening comes and sunset flames die out,
While Earth's eyes dim with vapourous dream-mists
grow,

List to the cheep of sparrows in the eaves,
The lazy "chuck" of drowsy wattle bird,
The lang'rous lapping of the southern sea,
The wind that sighs among the heart of hills.
All sound has correlating sight and light:

When first my lover's voice I heard, the thought
Came to me as of a noble cedar tree
Beneath whose lordly boughs safe should I rest
And bright the sun would shine. This was the time
He whispered tender words : the spring was in
My heart and in the world. When autumn came,
" I did but jest," he cried, and rode away,
Calling a light " Farewell ! " E'en as I heard
Those fateful words methought I stood alone
On a drear marsh, and in my hand I grasped
A broken reed, on which I fain had leant
To stay my feeble feet, but sharp it pierced
The hollow of my hand. On through the marsh
Went I, my steps oft caught by tangled flags
And oozy matted weeds ; harsh voices croaked,
While out against the moon, which low in heaven
Showed her shrunk face, a flight of curlews wheeled :
On, on went I now through a darksome brake ;
My flesh was caught by briars, which stretched their
arms

Like gossips who would cry, " Stay, stay and tell
Thy secret sorrow here "—then eager snatched
Some fragment of my robe to flaunt before
The passing world to certify that they
Knew all—" Lo ! here is proof to show." On, on :
At length, sore spent, I came unto a space
Of white dead grass which kept a fragrant breath
Of springtime's flowers. Upon my face I fell
And sobbed my grief. The white-stemmed trees stood
round—

They murmured low, and from their mighty boughs,

Pregnant with healing odours, fell a leaf
Shaped to the form of the young crescent moon,
To which the hopeful look and wish for love.
“Arise,” they whispered; “is no grief like thine?
What is this voice which ever haunts us so?
It is the sorrow of the human heart.
Quench thou thy passion’s flame where late it burnt
With devastating fire—let mercy shine.
Still thou hast strength: then, woman, waste it not
Lifting thine arms in idle prayer to Heaven:
Go through the world and raise the fainting ones,
And with them raise thyself high, high as God.
No idle oft-told words are these, but truth.
Depart with peace.” So sighed the mighty trees—
I drew their balm into my inmost soul.
Morn came and I was strong. I rose and went
From out the tree-girt, grass-perfumed space.
As I pressed on the briars turned to dust;
Lo! where the marsh had been a long white road,
Bright with the morning sun, went to the town,
From out whose steeples rang glad peals of bells.

A FORGOTTEN BIRTHDAY.



HE All-creative Power, compassioning
The briefness of the summer rain-mist's
stay,
Breathed forth a wish—a form in fashioning
Of colour like those mists touched by the
ray
Of sunset darted through the evening sky—
Earth's breast nursed one new life, the dragon fly.

FROTH.



O what can I compare my love for you?
 Note where some rock doth rise indifferent to
 The passion'd sea—some fleecy froth, some
 spray
 The sun and wind unheeded bear away.

You are the rock, and I the passion'd sea,
 This writing is the froth, which soon will be,
 By sun of scorn and people's word breath-born
 To naught, and none be heedful it is gone.

TO VIVIAN.

STANDING BENEATH A FLOWERING ALMOND TREE.



AM no painter, yet your grace shall stand
 Forth from my page. My pen shall rival
 Greuze.

Your red-gold hair, which August air has
 fanned

Into an aureole, shall never lose
 One ray of glory, but still shine while age
 Stands rev'rent back from this fair-favoured page


And leaves unchanged this season of the spring,
 The sky unclouded as your deep blue eyes,
 The almonds o'er you ever blossoming,
 Fadeless the brilliance of a sun which hies
 Not past its zenith, but, content with best,
 Stays while the shadows fall toward the west.

The pallor of your face, your scarlet mouth,
 Shall flush nor fade as move the seasons fleet ;
 The northern heat, the coolness of the south,
 Shall follow year by year. The tender wheat
 Shall wax to fulness of the ripened corn,
 Yet view no tittle of your beauty gone.

E'en as the fervid flame o'er porcelain throws
A bright protection which defies the might
Of age, so love's fierce warmth your form shall close
In shining panoply, to ward the night
Of dull oblivion back and steal from time
A longer morning and a fuller prime.



TO ISABEL.


 SPRING after spring the sweet acacia snow
 Drifting about your ivied walls doth blow ;
 Spring after spring the white and crimson
 may
 Mingles its perfume with the scent of hay
 Which yellows on the slopes that gently fall
 To where in ti-treed depths the wild birds call.
 Within the garden's precincts, spring by spring,
 The roses show their wealth of blossoming
 In cups of crimson, wreaths of cream and gold,
 Pink sea-shell hearted, and the buds which fold
 Around their scented leaves a modest veil
 Of dainty moss ; the bright Kennedyas trail
 Their scarlet blooms among the emerald grass.
 Spring after spring the soft sweet breezes pass
 O'er the tall pines, from whence a sighing sound
 Is heard. Perchance a poet's soul there found
 A resting place, and in that troubled air
 Is voiced his restlessness and his despair
 At want of words to picture forth the year
 In spring-time guise about your home. The clear
 Long bend of silver sea, touched by the moon
 Gleaming between the rifts of woods that croon

A song of ferns, whose downy fronds display
A newer beauty to the stream each day—
A song of wavering lights and shades that flee
In quaint cloud-ships upon the violet sea
Of heaven. Across the pallid moon they quickly pass,
Casting their shadows on the dew-gemmed grass.
You smile at these ideas, and think 'tis plain
They are the fancies of a dreamer's brain—
Or nod in kindly courtesy to please
My wayward thoughts—still you think the breeze
The only mourner in the balmy boughs ;
But I who write know it is pain endows
The pines with voice. Thus from my feeble song,
With which my hand has striven sore and long
To weave a web of beauty, I have left
The warp of light and perfume out : a weft
Of tangled grass and withered blossom stays
To mock the fruitless labour of my days.



A GOD'S TREASURE.



POET sings that the great god Pan
 Shaped a reed to the heart of a man;
 But the wise folks know the tale is not true :
 'Twas a woman's heart that he shaped it to;
 But I never heard that the toy was cast

Aside when the fancy of Pan was past.
 No, it is told that he treasured it long,
 Charming the world with its wondrous song,
 And the sweetest tone which the people beguiled
 Was the mother-voice which sings to the child.
 But now that his art has common grown,
 So thickly the fragile hearts are thrown
 Aside on life's path as men pass along
 That nobody stays to hear if the song
 Which lurks in the pipes is harsh or sweet,
 But tread them down with their hast'ning feet,
 Forgetting, oh, men ! what ye scornfully scan
 Once was the joy of the great god Pan.

1890.

AT TERAPENA STATION.

THIS is the chair where my darling will sit.
 I think I've got things pretty fit ;
 I've done the bookcase and all the shelves—
 Women they are sech stowaway elves.
 At that old case I had to scrub hard,

For what's a woman without a cupboard ?
 I've stopp'd the chimbley's trick o' smokin',
 For I'll bet my boots there wern't no joke in
 The way that chimbley did go on
 On winter nights, when the wind was strong.
 The parrot's learning " Nelly's so fair "—
 I wish he hadn't been taught to swear.
 Poor old Jack ! His dying word
 Was " Good-bye, Dick, take care o' my bird !"
 The garden—well, it's coming on fine ;
 The rose I call " Nelly " 's beginning to twine
 Over the porch, to keep out the sun
 From Nell sitting there when her work is done
 And watching along the road for me,
 And the kettle on a-singing for tea ;
 And after the supper's cleared away,
 And the " evenin' shadows is falling grey,"
 And there's not a sound but the curlew's call
 Or the dash of the distant waterfall,

Then You, Tom, back at last, old boy !
You've been spreeing agen at the " Traveller's Joy ;"
Sech a blessed long time, seems to me, I've been waiting.
Well, hand out the letters, and don't stand there prating.
Make haste with your supper, and see you take care
To fasten the calves in and rub down the mare.
Now, I'll sit me down by this old gum tree
And read what my darling has written to me.
I shouldn't wonder if this is to say
That when I get this she'll be on her way.
But the writing looks to me kind o' hurried ;
But, of course, if she's leaving, the darling was flurried.
So here goes. O my God ! not from Nell,
But some words from her sister, to tell—to tell
That she's dead !

O Nelly ! my sweet little wife,
May God in His mercy take me too—for life
Is finished and over, and never again
Will time lift this burden of sorrow and pain ;
And the home that I made her, so pretty and brave,
Henceforth and forever will seem like a grave.



GOLDEN SWALLOWS.



GOLDEN light-flecks on the wall,
 Chasing darkest shades away,
 You are not mere firelight flare—
 You are birds which rove by day.

But when night has spread her wings,
 Like a sheltering mother bird,
 Then to my room nest you creep,
 And, although no note is heard,

Yet your voiceless, brilliant forms,
 Flitting without aid of wing
 By the winter of my hearth,
 Promise give of coming spring.

A MAD POET'S SONG.



SOMEWHERE or other—I know not where—
 I heard the songs that the spirits of air
 Have never yet whispered to mortal ear.
 Perchance 'twas the time when I
 Was a ray of the flashing lights that flare
 In the darkened Northern sky ;
 Or a drop of rain
 On a window pane ;
 Or a cloud that traileth low
 Through the realms of air
 When the day is fair
 And the shadows come and go
 O'er the fields of corn
 Where the flowers are born,
 The poppies which slumber and dream ;
 Or a pebble white
 Besmit with light
 That flashed through the gurgling stream ;
 Or a clover leaf
 With its sweet life brief
 Cut short by the sharp scythe's gleam ;
 Or a snowy peak
 On a mountain bleak ;
 Or a wreath of mist
 By the moon's light kissed.

Somewhere or other—I know not where—
I heard these songs that are written here ;
They must not be whispered to mortal ear.

And the spirits have sung to me one
So sweet that the sound would overpower
Each one who heard it in mortal hour—

Ah ! THAT must be sung in the sun !



A VIEW FROM A LANE AT MAGILL IN JULY.

TO northward purple hills stood bold,
 And on the highest stayed a form of mist;
 It was as if some spirit had strolled
 From ranks of dewy night, and worn with
 tryst

Still peaceful slept, unheeding that the day
 Had torn the kindly veil of dark away.

Westward there lay a turquoise sea
 Bound by a shining bar of golden sand ;
 The dancing shadows of a giant tree
 Softened the emerald green of wheaten land,
 And the white city gleaming in the shine
 Seem'd not of earth, but something more divine.

Between the city and the lane where I
 Saw all this fairness lay a plot of ground
 Whence the dread cypress pointed to the sky
 And the white head-stones flashed o'er many a mound ;
 Near by an almond unclosed rathe pink flowers,
 A pear tree shed there gold and red leaf showers.

AUSTRALIAN LOVE SONG.




THY breath is sweet as rain upon dry grass,
 Thy bosom white as a drosera flower,
 Thy feet are swift as winds that seaward pass,
 O my beloved !

Thine eyes are as wild hyacinths 'neath dew,
 Thy voice is flute-like as an organ bird,
 Thy locks are golden as the wattle's hue,
 O my beloved !

Kindly thy smile as is the springtide sun,
 Scarlet thy mouth as a pomegranate flower,
 Thou art my love, my own beloved one,
 O my beloved !

A MIGHTY QUESTION.


 ONE, O ye gods ! is Babylon,
 Gone are her palaces and kings.
 Lean sage, and rotund scientist
 Now gabble on
 Her street sweepings,

Wrangling about a bit of shard :
 A funereal urn, so the lean sage avers—
 The scientist, a kitchen pot
 Or crock to guard
 A weaver's burrs.

Recks it to-day our graveyards turn
 The living faint with their corrupting stench ?
 Of course not. Is this crumbling shard
 A pot or urn ?
 Aye, *there's* the wrench.

UNITED.



NE sun shines o'er us both.

What matter that its gleams

Find thee by frozen streams

'Neath ice-clad northern pines,

And with me linger loth

To quit the southern vines.

What matter evermore,

Through climes of cold or heat,

Apart our weary feet

Shall climb the hill where we

Shall meet and ope the door

Where dwells eternity.

FLOWN :

A CHANSONNETTE.



T was an April morning,
 The wind sang soft from the sea,
 Bringing the breath of autumn
 To Lady Love and to me.
 Lady Love ?—yes, she was that,
 Though she did not know her power ;
 She should have taken me at
 My word in the April hour,
 Just while the wind was singing
 Soft from the sapphire sea,
 The breath of the autumn bringing
 To Lady Love and me.
 But she laughed at my vows and doubted—
 Ah, well ! it was all for the best,
 But Lady Love has discovered
 No birds are in last year's nest.

1888.

TILL.

A COGENT REASON.



HAT'S this, do yer say, that I'm eatin' ?

Why, can't yer see ez its cake ?

Sit down. Slice a chunk off yerself,

Tho' I don't rec'mend Till's make.

Who's Till ? Why, she's my on'y darter—

We live down there by the fence,

An' I've had the raring o' Till, sir,

Sence she didn't have no sense :

Not as she's got sech a stock jist now,

Unless it's to climb and sing—

Can't take my oath ez I've found Till smart

At a useful kind o' thing.

Pretty ? I can't count she is—

Her hair is so extry red

And the freckliest sort o' phiz,

'Cause she'd never wear aught on her head.

Good schooling ? Wal, Till has got none, sir :

She's an orn'ry sort o' gal ;

But I don't say as I'd keer to change her

For Smith's clever darter, Sal ;

And I'm sometimes doubtin' I'd swop her

For Brown's hansom darter, Mill,

For that orn'ry cuss of a gal, sir—

Well, you see, she's ——— Well, she's Till.


A SHATTERED IDOL.



WORSHIPPED an idol prayerfully,
 In the years that are far away ;
 I decked it with gold and jewels rare,
 Flower-strewn was the shrine each day.
 But earthly things seemed dross on the shrine
 Of that fair ivory idol of mine
 In the years that are far away.
 But the gold grew dim, and the flowers died,
 So cold and so drear was the shrine—
 It seemed but to cast a shadow on
 That ivory idol of mine.
 Was there not light within to turn
 The shadow without away ?
 Ah, no ! 'twas no idol of ivory,
 'Twas only a thing of clay.
 The years have come and have gone since then,
 But with me there dwells a day
 When the shrine grew dark, the shadow fell,
 And my soul went down to the deepest hell,
 And my idol turned to clay.
 Years, years have gone, but still years come ;
 Do you think, do you think if I pray
 That God might let my idol seem
 As it used to do in that golden dream,
 In the years that are far away ?

NONSENSE VERSES.

IN MEMORIAM FRANCOIS RABELAIS.



N every church a brooding hen
 Sat upon addled eggs, and men
 Cried "Pray be careful—if a fly
 Should make her rise the chicks would die."

In every college some grave don
 Most earnestly dilated on—
 Not the high jinks he played last night,
 But how young men should act aright.

In ladies' schools this truth was taught,
 To hold by it were all besought :
 That joys of single life are best
 (The teacher had four husbands blessed).

In every court a judge in state
 Talked of the poor's depravèd state,
 And would have looked a little blue
 Had he but heard their "Same to you."

In every market place were sold
For coins of brass pure wares of gold,
And one who cried, "Alas ! alas !"
Was told that gold was naught to brass.

In every hole and corner lay
Men who had never faced the day ;
The sun shone for the rich alone,
The poor had darkness for their own.

Above them all men said One stood
Who saw His work—and called it good,
And priests pretended that He ruled
The world, and so the world was fooled.



THE LORD IS RISEN.



HE organ pealed, and though 'twas Easter day
 I thought it sounded like a funeral dirge
 Mourning the Lord of truth still buried lay.
 A ray of light came to the pictured verge

Of Lazarus' tomb and fired the painted panes :
 Among the high black oaken rafters stirred
 A sweet-voiced priest whom God alone ordains—
 The echoes thrilled with singing of a bird.

Wordless the pæan, yet to me it said :
 "What seekest thou?" and I "My God" fierce cried.
 "Think'st thou to find the living midst the dead?"
 The priest, still carolling with joy, replied.

"These incense odours, they are but the spiced
 Embalmments cov'ring the corrupting clay,
 These vestments but his grave-clothes: know that Christ,
 The Lord of truth and love, is risen to-day."

“Go forth and seek Him—not in temples built
By mortal hands, where priests repeat his name,
But where compassion breaks the bonds of guilt,
And soft-eyed Pity leads the halt and lame ;

“Where sacrifice of self, or kindly deeds,
Shall loose one chain of sin’s or sorrow’s prison,
Where cheerful hands fulfill life’s daily needs ;
Go seek Him there—for there *the Lord is risen.*”



A SLOW AND STUPID SONG.



HE was a hard-worked lady help
 In the house across the way,
 He was a boundary rider
 With the usual princely pay.
 They both of them hoped to pinch and save
 Enough to marry—some day.

Three years since I wrote the above :
 Still slender the purse of the pair ;
 Ague and fever laid him low,
 And she has had to repair
 Her mother's old home—a tiny place
 With plenty of room for "care."

The years pass by, yet he and she
 Are each where they were. Her friends
 Say, "Dear, how that poor girl has gone off!"
 While his fear he drinks ; and so ends
 My song, which is so
 Very stupid and slow
 That nobody ever attends.

PA'S FAIRY TALE :

A TRUE STORY.

Papa :

HERE once was a prince, so brave and so bold—

Child : I know—just like you, papa.

Papa : And he loved a princess with hair of gold.

Was she as pretty as ma ?

Oh, yes ! quite as pretty—in fact, I think—

Let's see now, what did I say ?

Look out there, you're upsetting the ink ;

Nurse, take Miss Rosy away—

Oh ! well, you may stay, if you're still and don't cry.

He had loved her an awful time,

And every day the poor prince would try

To make amends for his crime.

What crime ? Why, the fact was this, do you see :

The prince was dreadfully poor,

And the princess's father used to be

Most rude, and say he was sure

The prince only wanted the lady's pelf—

To handle her money bags ;

He'd have sold his soul for the girl's bare self,

But he'd only his love and his rags.

Well, one luckless day the princess said,

“I love you, and you alone ;”

The prince took her word—he had better been dead—

But, alas ! he has lived to atone.

If he had but known—by Jove ! if he had——

Child : I don't like this story, do you ?

I hope they lived happy ; good night, dear dad.

Papa : That's just what they—didn't do !



IN A DRY LAND.



N optimistic friend of mine
 Preached, in the way men do,
 The very stars of heaven are fixed
 In order two and two,
 And urged each little blade of grass
 Has its own drop of dew.
 But one thing he forgot, I think,
 And it is this, alas !
 That every little drop of dew
 Has *not* its blade of grass.

AN ANGEL UNAWARES.



FOUND an angel one bright day

Asleep upon a mound of hay.

You ask how came an angel there ?

His dress was old, his feet were bare—

No doubt in falling from the sky

His wardrobe suffered. By-and-by,

When I had looked a little while,

I thought I saw the angel smile ;

I took an ear of fallen wheat

And with it stroked his rose-leaf feet.

He looked at me—I found his eyes

In colour mirrored back the skies.

He ope'd his mouth : no words can tell

The piercing horror of the yell

That issued thence. A voice cried, " Jim

Has woke—here, mother, come to him."

SONG.



AY, say, have you not seen
 One who is blue-eyed and tender,
 Daintily dressed in a robe of green,
 Hair like gold with bloom wreaths between?
 She of all joys is the sender.

Say, say, the dame you sing,
 Is she not some noble comer?
 Nay, nay, but a wanton thing,
 Only a rose-lipped Austral spring
 Holding out arms to the summer.

THE SCARLET FEATHER.



WHY do I think of that girl to-night
 While the lightning reddens the panes?
 She'd a cap with a scarlet feather
 And she used to walk in the lanes—

The lanes sloping down to the river,
 Which murmured like hidden truth :
 The scene comes back like a picture
 Not seen since my long gone youth.

A man, too, walked in the lanes sometimes
 In the warm, sweet summer weather.
 Was that the flash of a falling coal ?
 It looked like a scarlet feather.

No one remembers the story now,
 The river is secret ever,
 The only thing which it could not hide
 Was a little scarlet feather.

The man is honoured, flatter'd to-day,
Wedded and well to do,
But the paths of life are scorched and dry
By a flame of a scarlet hue.

No one knows in the secret drawer
Of a desk of scented leather
There is hidden a silken golden curl
And a faded scarlet feather.

But see, from their hiding place they come
And they whirl in the storm together—
It is not the lightning stains the skies,
'Tis the flash of the scarlet feather.



A BUTTERFLY'S WING.



BUTTERFLY'S wing and a grain of wheat
 Together lay side by side ;
 They glowed to gold in the noonday heat,
 They paled in the eventide.

"The spirit that moved me is dead," mourned
 the wing—

Gone is my splendour and pride."

"It was only a feeble summerling,"

The grain of wheat replied—

"It was only a feeble and feckless thing

That flaunted from flower to flower,

Fated to live while the birds did sing

Their bliss from each balmy bower,

And to die when the autumn's mellowing

Gave fulness of life to the corn,

And the chaunt the crimson poppies did sing,

From its golden depths upborn,

Seemed as the sound of sorrowing

For the butterfly lover gone.

They need not have sighed for his wantoning,

For a reaper came with the morn,

And the noonday saw them withering—

By the reaper's hand upturn."

"Alas ! alas !" moaned the butterfly's wing,

"Why do you thus deride ?"

"On earth there is never a frailer thing

Than thou," the grain replied.

A wind o'er the bare fields whispering

Bore through the bright noontide

The painted, empurpled golden wing—

With rarest gems it vied.

"See ! 'tis a stone from the crown of a king,"

The peasant's children cried ;

And after it all ran wondering,

Nor heeded their mother's chide :

"But *one* frailer thing than a butterfly's wing

In the whole world doth abide."

At last it came to a flashing spring

A youth and a maid sat beside.

"A frail, frail thing is this butterfly's wing,

But strong is my love," he cried.

*

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*

*

A year passed by, and that maid did sing,

As alone to the spring she ran,

"A frail, frail thing is a butterfly's wing,

But frailer the love of a man."

1888.



FIVE O'CLOCK TEA.



NOTE came written to me on
 The finest of cream laid ;
 It asked me up to tea at five
 With Prudence Plimpton. Shade
 Of Jove and all great gods be thanked !

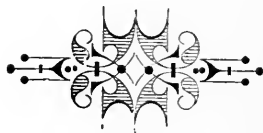
I'd an engagement on
 Just four doors down from Prudence' house,
 Or else I must have gone
 To meet dear Prue and a "few friends."
 Oh ! yes, I know them—girls
 Who have been girls these dozen years.
 I feel 'twere casting pearls
 Before an animal porcine
 To let them favour me
 With all the interesting news
 They'll tell at Prudence' tea.

* * * *

About the time of half-past six,
 As I'd some time to wait
 Until the humble tram passed by,
 I strolled by Prudence' gate :

And as I sauntered by again
I viewed a luckless elf
Come limping thence in woeful plight—
Great Scott ! it was myself.
I said—" Myself, *where have you been ?* "
In accents weak and wee
She moaned—" I came, alone, alive,
From Prudence Plimpton's tea."
Her cheeks were daubed like any clown's
With blanc de pèrle and rouge ;
And though she only takes a three
Her boots were sevens huge.
" My real size, they said," she wept ;
" And see that broken glass,
That's all that's left of Madam's gems ;
That paper heap ? Alas !
Bad *billet-doux* and I O U's
From men I counted saints ;
'Tis true, for Prue assured me that
Their very presence taints
The social atmosphere. To think
How I have been deceived
In that good-looking Billy Bones—
I really feel aggrieved.
You see that heap of refuse there,
From which a thick smoke curls,
That's all that's left of good repute
Of twenty dames and girls.
That money lying by the fence,
It has a reddish hue :
Well that, they said—but, oh ! I hope

The story *can't* be true—
But Viva said she had it on
The best authority——”
I said—“ Myself, I think I'll just
Call in on Viva V.
To tell her with my kindest love
'Tis dearest wish of mine
She'd drown within a pot of tea,
As Clarence did in wine.”



RAIN-DROPS AND ELVES.



O you know what summer rain-drops are—
 The light-kissed drops which flash like a star
 They are merry, tricksy elves.

For awhile they rest
 In a rose's breast

From the dance which none but themselves
 Can tread. Then away they tumble and run,
 Playing at hide and seek. See what fun
 Some have on the trailing bean,
 While another band
 Have taken their stand
 On a vine wreath's tender green.

They have fine fancies, these rain-drop sprites,
 And you may find them on summer nights

On a daisy fringe upborn,
 In the ivory well
 Of a lily bell,

Or a flame flower's scarlet horn.

They are dainty fellows, these elves: the wine
 They most prefer is the eglantine.

Right well do the rascals know
 Never such good cheer
 As an eglantier's

Cream coral-stained horn can show.

But if you should go to look for an elf
Don't take a friend, but go by yourself.

I went to elf hunt with one,

And she said, "Elves? Pooh!

Who'd see elves but you—

They are rain-drops touched by the sun."



UNSTABLE AS WATER, YE SHALL NOT
EXCEL.



O what shall I liken man's passion?
To waves which with purport set forth
For some distant shore, and yet dash on
The rocks. Or, again, to a moth

Which marks with celestial rapture
The tremulous pulse of a star,
But falls scorched and spoiled to the capture
Of rays from a lantern ajar.

Or, again, to a stream which is born
In mountains to water a land,
And circle fresh life to the corn,
But is stayed and engulfed by the sand.

TO MAGGIE.



NOW hear my vows :
 Were I your spouse
 Your life I'd cherish. Ah !
 I'd bow my head
 To all you said,
 I'd give up my cigar !
 I'd leave my club,
 A model hub
 I'd be—a priceless pearl !
 But then, you see,
 I'm not a he—
 I'm just another girl.
 So as I find
 That in my mind
Alone this pearl existeth,
 Let's join our hands
 In friendship's bands,
 And love go where he listeth.

A FRAGMENT.

IN AN ASYLUM.

“**M**AD,” they say to the people who come to pry
and jeer,
“Mad since her lover left her—mad this
many a year.”
No, not mad—only senseless of joy, or
hope, or grace :

The brain cannot feel, you know, with the I in another
place,

And I am away with my lover—away in the glad, gay
world ;

We left this mad I here lest the lips of scorn be curled
At that I which is really I—this is not I whom you see.
So that we twain be happy, what if this mad thing be
Scared by hell’s fiends as she wakes in the night and
cries—

“ Let me hear my lover’s voice, gaze in my loved one’s
eyes.”

She is foolish and weak on the wrongs that he dealt to
brood—

The real I is glad he did what seemed to him good.

Hark to the laugh of the real I—it rings like merry
chimes.

Stay, do you know what this I thinks, dares to hope
sometimes?

That the real I will come—come with her lover glad,
Pity and take away this wretched I who is mad.



THE IDEAL FOR THE REAL.



WHEN I was a lad I was frequently told
 Of the marvellous glories of Spain ;
 In fancy I shared with its buccaneers bold
 Their daring exploits on the main.

I dreamt of its bandits, its bull-fights, its ships,
 With their outlandish crews and strange shapes,
 And still in my dreams caught ambrosial sips
 Of pomegranates, garlic, and grapes.

Then later its gardens, still later its girls,
 With their wonderful ankles and eyes,
 Mantillas and orris, small slippers, fans, pearls,
 In visions enchanting would rise.


* * * *

I am old, I've a wife who is horribly plain,
 I've a cough which is killing me quick,
 And all I possess to remind me of Spain
 Is a twopenny "Spanish juice stick."

1888.

KNOCK AT THE GOVERNMENT DOOR.

[*On the Honourable T. P——d refusing to ask the Government of South Australia to give a grant to establish a school for cookery.*]


 IN the night while I was sleeping
 Wondrous visions came to me,
 And adown the future ages
 Far away I seemed to see
 There a mighty host of people,
 Pale and bloodless, ghost-like rise,
 Gaunt and haggard, lean and weary,
 Listless, with lack lustre eyes ;
 But these spectres, notwithstanding
 All their faintness, raised a voice
 Loud and mighty, ever calling
 Out in language none so choice—
 “Where is T. P——d, where the villain
 Who hath doomed us to this fate ?
 He of whose great patriotism
 South Australians used to prate.”
 Then methought unto the Houses
 Of Assembly they did swarm,
 Every one gesticulating,
 Using language rather warm.

“ Who are these gaunt, haggard people ? ”

Then in wondering tones I cried ;
And a spectre, turning toward me,
In most awful voice replied—

“ We who stand upon the steps here,
Knocking at the Government door,
Martyrs are unto dyspepsia,
Worse than any were before.

We are future South Australians,
Lean as famine, gaunt as rooks,
Doomèd thus because T. P——d
Would not give a grant for cooks.
Knew he not, that mighty P——d,
Brillât-Savarin has said

That the fates of nations very
Much depend on what they're fed ?

Did he wish that ne'er another

Greater than he should arise,
And is that the reason that he

Doomed us to tough stews and pies ?
See the nations all around us—

What a glorious name they make !
All save hapless South Australians,
Weighted down by heavy cake.

Nor is this alone the list of

All our many, various ills :
Where our mothers knocked for cooks, sir,
We have come to knock for pills.”

Then I wailed aloud in anguish—

Not at what the spectre said,
But because I found I'd tumbled

From my couch and hit my head.
Murmuring softly, "Dinner's dumplings,"
Fully did I sympathize
With those future South Australians
And their heavy cakes and pies.



THE CICADA'S SONG.




PASSIONATE cadence, sweet and shrill,
Comes over hollow and field and hill.

Is it the summer complaining
His glad embrace pales spring's fair face,
And her beauties all are waning?

Yes, for the day the cicada tunes
His high, shrill pipes to the praise
Of the summer sun, spring's life is done—
She dies 'neath the sun-god's gaze.

SONG TO LILIAN.

 WAS dark, but you came near me
And daylight filled the skies ;
You spoke, and where reigned silence
Sweet songs of birds did rise ;
The clouds of sorrow o'er me
No longer drifted by—
Thy presence was the sunlight
Which made the shadows fly.

ABRAHAM THE SECOND.



WISH the Lord would just step down,
 And from this worldly din
 I'd lift my voice and shame this town
 A tellin' of its sin.

Of how young Smith has reg'lar drunks,
 And leads a idle life ;
 How ole man Simms is such a hunks
 He nearly starves his wife.

Of how them boys of Dixe's swears,
 And how the Boseleys fights ;
 How Jonas Wyle stole Deacon's pears,
 And goes home late o' nights.

Then Deacon's darter dresses so,
 Tho' orful plain in face ;
 And Deacon never seems to show
 No speshul signs o' grace

But rather seems o' worldly mind,
And set on flocks and herds.
Ah me ! a heap o' help he'd find
From my enlightened words.

But no ! his hoss he litches at
The gate of widow Bews—
The things as I could tell o' that
Old sinner if I'd choose.

And then the scandal as is talked
Down at the sewin' class,
I wonder ghostses has not walked
Back from the churchyard grass.

And though mine ears I've never lent
To any evil tales,
I wonder lightnin's ain't bin sent
To smite Matilda Bayles.

But well I know why Jonesville town
Is neither burnt or drowned—
The Lord on me is lookin' down,
The one good man bin found.

But some day I, like Abraham,
Forth to the Lord must go,
Then what'll come to Jonesville, ma'am,
I'm sure I do not know.

SPOKEN AT THE CLUB.

AFTER DINNER—BOB AND HIS FRIEND TEDDY.



H, yes! I was at the Acacias',
 'Twas a regular tiptopping ball,
 Music and supper splendacious,
 And Nell was the belle of it all—
 At least, that was quite my impression
 That night when I gazed on the throng,
 But since then I've such a depression
 Of spirits I think I was wrong.
 I danced with Miss Nell quite nine times—
 I know it excited remark
 (Sir Robert has excellent wines)—
 We walked where the garden was dark.
 Old fellow, it's no use to wail,
 I've got in the deuce of a mess;
 On Monday I'm off by the mail—
 Miss Nell, oh! you bet she said "Yes."

* * * *

Why here is a letter from Nell,
 To ask me, of course, to "See pa,
 And to beg if a friend she can tell
 Of our marriage"—how keen the girls are.

Here, Teddy, wade through the effusion,
My coffee is getting quite cold.

(Ted reads)—

“Dear Mr. ——” “Oh, Moses! confusion!

Old fellow, your berth can be sold :

Listen, chappie ; she says that ‘ the swift

Blowing flowers of affection have wilted’—

In fact, my dear sonnie, the drift

Of this letter’s to tell you—*you’re jilted.*”



A SCHOOLGIRL'S STORY.



TWELVEMONTH ago since you married !

My stars ! Time has gone upon wings.

In coming, a long time you tarried ;

Yes, I heard you had gone to the Springs.

Ain't you glad you're not still at school,

With horrid long themes to prepare ?

I must stay—I was always a fool ;

My grammar and spelling !—well, there !—

In a princess, you know, wouldn't wash.

I say, did you hear pa had bought

Foreign title of Prince ? Ain't it bosh ?

But the dear old chap isn't that sort ;

But ma did so worry and fret

For a handle to put to her name

That dad, just for peace sake, you bet,

Bought the title of Prince Delacreme.

And many a time, I declare,

I cry when I think of the days

When we had never a care,

Nor riches, nor new-fangled ways ;

And I'd give all the jewels I've got

For a scamper across the plain

And a romp with Towser and Spot,
And to live the old life again.
But never mind. I want to hear
Of all you've seen and where you went,
And if your married life, my dear,
Has made you happy and content.
A good long yarn I so enjoy.
What's this you whisper?—Well! well! well!
Don't call it Richard, if a boy,
And if a girl, *do* call it Belle.
Sit down on my bed: not that chair—
One leg got broke last "feast" by Loo—
And I'll sit snug by you: now, there!
Shall I have first spin, or will you?
Me? Well, then, I'll just start ahead
And tell you: Just after you went,
A new girl was given your bed;
We wished that she'd never been sent,
And wanted to get her exchanged—
She used to cry out in her sleep,
We thought that her mind was deranged.
I tell you it made our flesh creep
To hear her moan low in the night;
And then she'd a terrible cough—
No mixtures or drops put it right.
Min said it would soon take her off,
And thought 'twould be better if Pearl
(For that was the new comer's name)
Kept that bed. Min's a soft-hearted girl.
In the winter Pearl's cough harder came,
Though we poulticed and rubbed her, and Min

Bought her tonics, but she would not thrive :
She was—oh, dear !—so terribly thin,

I wonder that girl kept alive ;
But still she would have it, poor thing !

“ There’s nothing the matter—oh, no !—
I’m better already, the spring—

The spring, that will make the cough go.”
It did ! In the spring, dear, she died.

I know she was glad to be gone.
My gracious ! the way that Min cried—

She is such a girl to take on.
I cried, but I frankly confess

My heart was so bright with its love,
I held there was reason to bless

The goodness which took her above.
She’d had some love trouble, you know—

I thought I would sooner have died,
If Richard had treated me so,

’Twould hurt so to think he had lied
Who vowed he loved no one but me.

I must tell you the night ere Pearl slept
She gave me some letters that she

In a satchel of satin had kept—
They’d laid on her labouring breast.

With a faltering, weak hand she drew
Them forth, and she said—“ It is best,

Dear Belle, that I give them to you ;
I cannot—I cannot take these

Cruel lines to my chill, dreadful bed—
Oh, Belle, will you burn them, dear, please,
When—when I am helpless and dead.”

The night she was buried I took

Them down to the scant schoolroom fire,
I was lonely and sad—my hand shook.

The letters made dull flames leap higher ;
My fancy seemed playing me tricks,

For there in the flickering flame,
That handwriting surely was Dick's,

The characters glowed red as shame.
Some vestas I snatched from the shelf—

I own I was wronging a trust,
But, Maud, put it now to yourself,

You know you'd have felt that you must
Find out if he really was false,

So cruel, deceitful, and mean.
Next door someone played "Our Last Waltz."

One letter lay open : "Between
Us," it read, "there must now be an end

Of this love ; it was folly all through.
It's no use to write or to send,

I'll make no reply if you do ;
The pauper that you have become

Would hamper a man such as I,
And I must look out now for some

Great heiress. Good wishes—good-bye."
Not one more vile line, Maud, I read,

But wrote, though my pen played me pranks—
"The pauper you jilted is dead,

The heiress declines you with thanks."
So mind, if a boy, it's not Dick.


I'm thankful my spinning is over ;
Yes, I reckon I felt pretty sick,

Though it wasn't the loss of a lover—
There's plenty of them, as you know.

What hurt me is easily seen —
'Twas finding the man I'd loved so
Was a horrible sneak and so mean.



TO THE WEST WIND.


 Y love, the earth, had veiled her face
 In clouds of fleecy mist,
 And I, her lover in disgrace,
 Stole softly up and kissed
 The veil that hid her from my sight,
 Until my warmth dispelled
 The cruel curtain, and soft night
 Her last faint murmur quelled.
 The moon revealed her face and form,
 Mine, mine, with all her charms ;
 And, dearer from the estranging storm,
 She rested in my arms.

“WHY DO WOMEN WILT?” (ANDREW LANG).

THE REASON WHY.

GONE are the “ivory gates” of Most High God,
 Gone is “the golden throne, the jasper sea,”
 To nothing turned by the transforming rod
 Of Science—drear magician! Chivalry
 Is dead, and dead the noble, pure-souled
 knights

Who revered women. Left to bear their name
 Behold a band of nerveless, brainless wights,
 At clubs and dances sneering off the fame
 Of those whose weakness should their pity claim.

O puny pigmies! who the name of man
 Still bear—and with the name your birthright ends,
 Since for a mess of pottage—strengthless bran—
 You sold your noble heritage. What friends
 Have you not driven from your barren hearth—
 Pure wife, strong sons, and high ideal. What gained?—
 A band of cynic fellows, little worth
 As you; a fair life’s record vilely stained;
 And evil pleasures which have oft’ner pained.

By the first law of Nature 'tis decreed

Ye shall appear in women's eyes as gods.

Show yourselves gods : in women's hour of need

Lighten their burdens, turn the galling rods

Of sharp repression and a loveless lot

Aside from out their paths ; let flowers grace

(Blossoms of love and truth, so long forgot

And left untended in the weed-grown space

Of daily life) the sight of each wan face.

Have ye no pride ? Behold the potter skilled

Turns with a sense of comfort to his wares ;

The husbandman who views his fields well tilled

Has sown life-giving corn, not choking tares.

What have ye done ? What work accounted meet

For praise has your hands shaped ? Idols of gold,

Whose altars rise in every city's street—

A life whose highest aim is "Bought and sold."

What wonder women wilt in climes so cold !



ABOVE RUBIES.



HE rises while it is yet night—
 But I wish to goodness she
 Would do her work she fusses about
 'Thout risin' the birds an' me.
 Her household clad in scarlet? No,
 Not we—we're most in the blues;
 I think an invisible garment
 Is the sort of one I'd choose.
 Her husband sits with the elders? Wal,
 I sit at the "Roarin' Lamb."
 She sez I'm bound for destruction. Hum!
 Likely enough ez I am.
 She giveth her maidens their portion?
 No—our hired girls don't stay;
 One on 'em did for a fortnight wunst,
 Time M'riar was away.
 The neighbours sez I should bear it meek,
 But I don't set up for a saint.
 The deacon says, "No place like a home!"
 No, I thank the Lord there ain't.
 "Her price is far above rubies!"
 Yes, it's thus the Scripture runs.
 Wal, if M'riar's price is 'bove rubies
 I guess they're Orstraylyun ones.

THE MOTHER'S VOICE.



OPEN thine arms, dear mother, close me in,
 All else beside thee is but sere and thin,
 Alone thy placid presence seems to be
 The one, the great, the sure reality.
 Allay this fevered thirst, let me become
 The loam that feeds the flowers where wild bees hum,
 The dust that falls in rocky fissures deep
 And holds the fern where shining lizards creep.
 Methought my mother called unto her child,
 In accents filled with majesty, yet mild—
 “Why fret?—e’en as thou art canst thou not see
 Thou now art part—nay, almost all, of me?
 Above the brutes, canst thou not comprehend
 My varied beauties—nay, the paths I wend
 Are not unknown to thy unquiet mind.
 Why art thou ever wandering as the wind
 And ever waiting for oblivion’s rest
 Within the commune of my sheltering breast?
 The meanest creature that on earth doth run—
 It, thou, and I, the universe, are one.

GALATEA.



HY didst thou leave me not within the
shade
Of drear Pentelicus? I was senseless
there—

Not fretted with the anguish now I know.

Alas for me! who lived in cold content,
Serene and happy, feeling not the fire
Of molten passion coursing through my veins.
When I before thee layed, a formless block,
And on me rang the quiv'ring icy steel,
I then first felt the force of thy desire,
And from that hour content no more was mine.
Thy trembling hand, which feared to shape too fast,
Was oftentimes chided by my pulsing stone.
I felt as though I could have risen up
And faced thee; but the gods denied the power.
Ah! what an anguished ecstasy was mine
When thou, at last, hadst wrought me from the stone,
And thy most impious prayer, breathed at my feet,
Was granted, and my chill limbs flushed with life.
When first descended from my pedestal,
Locked in thine arms I lay as one whose breath
Had not yet come—I drew it from thy mouth,
Yet did not know if it were mine or thine,
So one were we. Oh! my belovèd love,
How can'st thou gaze on me as stone again?

* Pentelicus, a mountain of Attica, where were found quarries of beautiful marble.

PHŒBUS.

“No saint like a sinner reformed.”

FROM the broad plains and up the vine-clad
slopes
The young day reels, o'ercome with sunlight's
wine,
And seeks the dusky hollows of the hills,
Where lies his love the shade, reclined at ease
On couch of fern and moss. Not long he waits,
Viewing her shyly through the latticed rift
Of boughs which canopy her bed, but goes
Swift to the loved one's arms. She at the first
Coyly eludes his clinging, warm embrace,
Then to her bosom clasps his golden head
And of her dark locks makes a cloak to shade
His bright limbs from the burning noontide heat.
Pillowed in happy rest, long lies he thus
Drinking his love's cool kiss. But when the hours
Some time have gone upon their western way
They call him thence: with lingering feet he climbs
The eastern hills—the mourning shade pursues.
The hill heights gained, day views his love, the sea,
Then hastes with ardour to her silver halls.

Him she receives in kindly mood, and long
He lingers, lulled by lapping lullabies.
When in the under world the torch of dawn
Lighteth the pyre of fast-dying night
Day slowly comes in sombre robes of grey—
Cold, silent, and severe—with chilling breath
Which scarce can melt into a mist of tears
The white snow-maidens sleeping in the dells.



THE PORT OF GUAM.



AL, sir, they didn't agree :
 He were a poyet by trade,
 And she were that pesky kind o' she
 As 'ud call a spade a spade.

So in the words o' my nabor,
 Him they call Frisco Sam,
 He struck his poyetical tabor,
 An' sailed for the Port o' Guam.

An' when it was hinted mister'us,
 He'd bin spoke with another craft,
 Wal, some o' the nabors look'd ser'us,
 And some on 'em snigger'd an larfed.

But we said, sir, me an' my pard,
 As we sot by the fire that night,
 That tho' her afflicshun was hard,
 It sarved her jolly wal right.

For somehow you'll allers find,
 The thing as a man can't condone
 Is a she who gives him a bit o' her mind—
 We've all got enough of our own.

SOLILOQUY BY AN AUSTRALIAN
MILLIONAIRE.

[*Scene—Sculptor's Studio, Rome.*]



SELDOM have I ever seen a
Finer girl than Messalina ;
But, my soul ! I think, between us,
That I'm most inclined to Venus.
Isn't that a charming smart she
Whom they call the Andromache ?

No—I think I really see
My best choice in Eurydice.
Oh ! these, lovely, charming, fair,
Drive me unto wild despair.

It would calm my agitation
Could I give them to my nation,
And my beating heart be stayed
By seeing them in Adelaide.


THE CAVE.



HE hills were stained with thistles' lilac flowers,
 And down the slippery sides to view the cave
 (The scene of childish sports in bygone time,
 But now for long unvisited) I went.
 It had been hung with flowers when I, a
 child,

Passed with my girl friends such a happy day,
 Without a care to cloud my birthday *fête*.
 Now it was almost hid by the dead stalks
 Of Aaron's rod, no longer blest with bloom,
 And tall sere thistles, shedding rayed seed stars
 That seemed like ghosts of dreams and perished hopes ;
 Horehound and fennel gave the air a fume
 Which brought a sense of sorrow undefined.
 On the cave's floor the grey dead ashes lay,
 From fires kindled in the winter nights
 By shepherds sheltering from the chill June wind :
 They seemed the ashes left from fires of youth,
 Where age would come and cower beside and watch
 The star-ghosts fly, and breathe the fennel's fume,
 And listen to the dreary, rustling stalks,
 On which no spring may breathe bloom benison.

THE GIRL WHO LIVES NEXT DOOR.


 HE girl who lived next door to me
 Last year seemed sadly changed ;
 She who home's sunlight used to be
 Now got but looks estranged.

No notice got from friends who'd vowed
 Her presence blest their sight ;
 In vain by day she looked so proud
 Who wept so much at night.

I married her, but white as foam
 She walked the chancel floor ;
 And though she never goes from home
 She always seems next door.

AT SCOTT'S, IN '91.



OU, Jack!—from the “Great Never-never?”

You heard I was here, so called in.

Come up to our room and stay dinner.

Not dressed? That don't matter a pin.

What ages it is since I've seen you!

Not since that grand time that we had
That summer we travelled together—

You and I and the darling old dad.

You know he has gone to his rest, Jack,

And that was the reason you came?

'Tis just like your own thoughtful kindness;

And Teddy will tell you the same.

Who's Teddy? Why Teddy's my husband—

And did you not hear that I'd got

“The very best match of the season?”

How could it have been you did not?

True, the wedding was quiet, for dad

Was ailing and weak even then;

But I thought you would surely have heard

From some of the up-going men

If even you missed the announcement.

How! Going already! What for?

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Oh, Jack ! Is this true ? Oh ! my darling,
Why did you not tell me before ?
Too poor ! but just got your appointment—
Alas, then, how poor too am I !
Good-bye ! Yes, my dear Jack, it must be
For ever and ever good-bye.
Good-bye ! and remember to-day, dear,
That even acquaintanceship ends :
You and I, Jack, who should have been lovers,
Could never—must never be friends ;
But you will remember me sometimes,
And, when you are thinking of me,
Believe that I died in the summer—
The summer we spent by the sea.



TO A SUNFLOWER BY THE RIVER, IN
WHICH THE SUN WAS REFLECTED.



N ages past the hapless Clytie tried
Once more to win Apollo to her side ;
But 'twas in vain she followed the bright sun—
He plainly told her that his love was done.

But thou, her namesake, still more luckless art—
What hopeless fervour must inflame thine heart,
For now presented to thine anguished view
Not only one Apollo is, but—two.

CHARMIAN THE SECOND.

[Written in a museum on seeing the mummies of an Egyptian lady
and gentleman.]



N the museum as I idly dreamed,
The warm spring sunshine through the window
gleamed,
And falling on two mummies' crumbling bones,
Methought they murmured thence in mournful
tones

The story of their past : the human bliss,
The beauty, passion, love, which left—*but this.*

The prying scientist has placed us here,
Ravished from out our tombs, has rent our cere-
Clothes off, nor even left a shroud
To veil our gruesome bodies from the crowd.
“ Charmian, thou shalt more loving be than loved,”
One Charmian once was told, but I reproved
Thee, love, when thou didst raise thy face to mine
And whisper, “ Mine is greater love than thine.”
Ah ! how I loved thee in that far-gone day,
When in mine ear thy voice was as the lay
Of music over waters murmuring low.

Dost thou remember how we used to go
Down paths where moon-kissed palms had wreathed
A lace-like web of shade and light, which sheathed
Thy gliding form as tremblingly we stole
Down to my boat moored by the cypress bole,
Hid by tall reeds where the lone ibis grieved,
Thence, floating through the waters, lotus-leaved,
We drifted down the stream. One night the flow
Of water seemed to mourn ; the young moon low
Out in the west—a bended bar of flame—
Dropped from our sight, and o'er the water came
A gust of perfume, a deep spicy breath,
Pleading that life was short and bound by death,
And that the present hour came not again.
Our boat had stayed where sycamore and plane
Grew by a ruined temple ; thy dark eyes
Glinted as water showing star-gemmed skies.
On the near bank the sweet Nile lilies gleamed—
Not whiter than thy circling arms they seemed ;
While from the shadow of thine unbound hair
Thy face showed fairer than the lilies were,
Which leaned to hear each happy whispered word—
“ Beloved ” was the only one they heard.
“ Beloved ” in thine ear I murmured low,
“ Beloved ” mourned the water in its flow.
Charmian, thou wert more loved than loving when
Thou laid'st within these arms. My kisses then
Wooed thee as woos the sun the lotus flower,
Burning with passion, fiercer every hour,
Through its coy petals, purely, whitely cold,
Into the radiance of its heart of gold.

Alas ! too soon above the Theban hills
Came the grey light which with its pallor chills
The warm, love-freighted hours of happy night.
I seized the oars : the water caught the light
Newborn upon its breast. I quickly rowed
To where the scented orange darkly showed
Her glossy leaves against the marble stair,
And in the stillness of the perfumed air
Your low-breathed words of fear I kissed away.
Flame arrows eastward showed the coming day,
And on thy fair face was the flush of dawn :
Thus through the years thine image have I borne.

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Stealing among the palms, and armed for strife,
Came he who by the law could claim thee wife.
O Charmian ! then “ more loving than beloved ! ”
Those fateful words !—alas ! too sadly proved,
For all in vain your tender form you gave,
Reckless of death, my worthless life to save.
Unarmed, despairing, 'neath the palms I fell
Beside thee, Charmian, who had loved so well.



IN A GARDEN BY THE TORRENS.




HE lily has shaken her buds of green
 To snowy gold-tongued flowers,
 She swings her bloom over amethyst sheen,
 Falling with early hours,
 Leaving but petal-empurpled swards,
 And many a golden crown,
 To tell of the regal shimmering gauds
 The cistus bush has known.
 The sunflowers stand as tall sentinels,
 With brazen shields arrayed,
 Guarding the ivory lily bells,
 Which raiding bees invade ;
 But all in vain is their zealous care,
 For through the long warm day
 The vagrants drone to the quivering air,
 " Where there's a will there's a way,"
 And loading themselves with their nectar freight
 They drowse in the snowy cool,
 Not winging hiveward till there are great
 Shadows laid on the pool
 Where the mirror'd face of the iris lies
 Deep in the water world,


Watching the glittering dragon flies
With their gauzy wings empearled.
The sun sinks down in the saffron west,
The shadows of night draw on,
The iris fades from the water's breast,
And the summer's day is gone.



AN OCTOBER SONG.


 'LL sing you a song of the gold which shines
 From the sun-kissed green of the new-leafed
 vines ;
 Sing you a song of the white clouds high
 Hung in the blue of October's sky ;
 I'll sing you a song of the birds, which call
 To their mates ; and a song of the waterfall,
 Which shouts with the strength of the winter's voice
 To the earth and the spring, " Rejoice, rejoice !"
 I'll sing you a song of the bud that shows
 The first faint flush of the coming rose ;
 Sing you a song of the shades as they creep
 And turn the range to a billowy deep,
 Where the amethyst hill-waves catch the ray
 Of the sinking sun ; and October's day
 Has passed away as a love that is flung
 Aside. For song, love, and a day of the spring—
 Yes, each of these is so common a thing.

TO BRET HARTE.


 O you I'll raise
 A song of praise,
 O greatest of magicians !
 Who in my by-gone childhood's days
 Led me through noisy gulches' blaze,
 Afar down pine-clad cañon ways,
 Past fondas and by missions.

 Sometimes I strayed
 With padres staid,
 Sometimes with wild vaqueros,
 And as I grew a taller maid
 (To own it I am half afraid,
 For still the passion's scarce allayed),
 I loved your scapegrace heroes.

 Untouched by rays
 Of Austral days,
 Lost in Madroño hollow,
 I heard the chattering of the jay,
 Watched bright-eyed rabbits at their play,
 And marked the " outcast clad in grey "
 Upon their footsteps follow.

Charmed by your quill
'Twas thus each hill
Became a vast sierra.
I saw "Lone Star" tower by Magill,
Watched pines, not gums, with sunshine thrill,
Went home and got well scolded till
Australian views seemed nearer.

Oft o'er the plain
I saw a train
Of diggers, *senoritas*,
Road agents, Yuba Bill profane ;
Not wattles glowed with sunset stain,
But berried *marzanitas*.

I saw Ah Sin
With fingers thin
His frequent aces dealing,
I sighed and wept at fate of Flynn,
Helped old John Burns his homestead win,
Heard through Francisco's pulsing din
The Angelus sweet pealing.

You are a sun
Compeered by none :
With threads from out the wildwood
A magic carpet you have spun,
On which each toiling town-pent one
May journey far when work is done—
And, oh ! your treasure stores of fun,
How dear to lonely childhood.

Though years have flown
Still as my own
Most cherished friend I rank you.
My song is sung—it's poor in tone,
I fear its faults you'll not condone,
But you so cheered the dull years lone
That I have tried to thank you.

Could I but bless
With happiness
Some life as you have mine,
Beguile sad hearts from their distress,
And midst the city's stifling press
Bring the cool mountain wind's caress,
I'd count the work divine.



MARGUERITE AND FAUST.

FRAGMENT.



OUT in the garden, where few stars give light,
 A girl is wandering. Suddenly a white
 Tall lily breaks from off its stem and sways
 To earth ; and lo ! the darkened garden ways
 Are bright with brilliance of a falling star
 Engulphed by mountains standing high and far.
 Is it a footstep on the pathway stirs,
 Or but a fallen leaf which lightly whirrs
 Adown the grass ? Hush ! hear the night wind's call—
 Where two have fallen there a third will fall.

SONG.



It was the time the wattle's bloom
 Hung out her tassels golden
 I met thee, love, beneath the gloom
 Of forest giants olden.

The breeze brought full and sweet per-
 fume ;

It was the time of wattle bloom.

The lilac showed to skies of blue

Her amethystine treasures—

Sweet songsters hither, thither flew,

And sang of nesting pleasures.

The breeze brought full and sweet perfume ;

It was the time of wattle bloom.

The wattle's gold has passed away,

The lilac's flowers are dying,

The nesting birds no longer stay,

And I, *alone*, am sighing

O'er the dead hopes, the sweet perfume,

Which faded with the wattle bloom.

IMITATION OF A GERMAN BALLAD.

Lover :

WHY dost thou droop, O red rose,

Why dost thou fade away ?

Rose : The maid whom thou adorest,

She wandered here to-day ;

She sought thee, but she found not,

And, seeing me alone,

Cried out in jealous anger,

“ Where is my lover gone ?

Thy leaves perchance conceal him,

To that thy blush is due ;

But I will steal thy beauty.”

Then from her hand she drew

A drop of her warm life-blood

And placed it at my feet :

Now all my bloom and beauty

Through her full veins will fleet.

Lover : Why bloomest thou so proudly,

O red rose, sweet and tall—

Why wave thy brightest banners

Upon the churchyard wall ?

Rose : The girl whom thou deceivedst,
Beneath my feet she lies ;
It is her true heart's colour
My blushing face which dyes.



SOUVENIRS.



ON my desk a shoe lies,
 It is but a two size,
 Each to whom 'tis new cries—
 “What a dainty dot!”

But I do not care a
 Straw about the wearer,
 Whether Maude or Clara
 Matters not a jot.

This bright lock of hair is
 From some charming fairy's
 Head. I think 'twas Mary's—
 No, by Jove, 'twas Trot!

Ah, how I was smitten
 When I begged that mitten!
 Now that wretched kitten
 Hold of it has got.

This, if the dear fair knew,
They would have a care to
Whom their gifts they share—few
Ever guess the lot

Of each tender token,
Tarnished, frayed, or broken,
Saved to crack a joke on:
It is well they've not.

MORAL.

To the modern masher
Souvenirs but trash are—
Give them to a Pasha
Or a Hottentot.



BREAD AND WINE.



CUP of opal
 Through which there glows
 The cream of the pearl,
 The heart of the rose ;
 And the blue of the sea
 Where Australia lies,
 And the amber flash
 Of her sunset skies,
 And the emerald tints
 Of the dragon fly
 Shall stain my cup
 With their brilliant dye.
 And into this cup
 I would pour the wine
 Of youth and health
 And the gifts divine
 Of music and song,
 And the sweet content
 Which must ever belong
 To a life well spent.
 And what bread would I break
 With my wine, think you ?
 The bread of a love
 That is pure and true.

“BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART.”



MAN! whose reason can attain such heights
Of wisdom—man, who weighs the bulk of
distant stars
And takes the lightning's powers to speak your
will

From pole to pole with all the lightning's speed ;
Who once, a naked savage, fed on roots,
And with rude weapons slew the beasts which roamed
The gloomy forests, and from that hour hast made
Such progress as our present time can show.
Man, whose untiring zeal and purpose strong
Bends to your will the powers of earth and air,
Why dwarf your reason with the narrow creed
That breathes of hell and an avenging God—
As timid babes who wander in the dark,
And with some dreadful form affright themselves,
Which is but visible to frenzied eyes ?
How long shall starving children cry for bread,
And for their fainting bodies get but stones—
The stones of doubt, and fear of a chastising God,
Which with their presence lash the living stream
Into a seething and devouring flood ?
Led by smooth channels, might it not become

A noble river, bearing on its tide
Fair goodly ships to ports of peace and love.
Dream not by dwelling in some place apart
Where no occasion for temptation comes,
Or by ascetic lashing of the flesh,
Ye shall behold your God ; but by the power
Which ever works unto a goal of good
The pure in heart shall see Him, and will gain
This promise by no servile prayers or fears,
But he who leads a pure, unselfish life,
And with his utmost power works on to lift
The clouds of ignorance, disease, and want,
Which dim the brightness of our human life.
Woe unto us that in our gates the cry
Of children and the weaklings beg for aid.
Woe unto us the naked go unclothed,
The thirsty parched, the hungry unappeased ;
That still behind the prison bars are caged
Captives less human than the beasts which dwell
In jungles vast and "seek their meat from God."
For inasmuch as we have heeded not
Their suffering, we have stumbled, and have missed
Another step upon the shining stair
Which leads us upward to the door of heaven.
Great Science, "shed thy light on men, and scare
The phantoms which affright uncultured minds."
The flesh is precious : 'tis a robe God gives ;
Let each man see, then, that the robe be clean,
And brodered with the gems of gentle deeds.
Let no man dare to rend his neighbour's robe.
Who first did feign the body was a husk


And all its pleasures were the snares of hell ?
'Twas surely one who had so marred the mould
Of manhood with corrupting, hideous sin
That his dulled mind could only grasp the creed
That all pertaining to the flesh is damned.
'Twas surely he, and others like to him,
Who say it is God's will to show his wrath
By scourge of famine, foul disease, and war.
Cowards ! who will not use one single means
To stem the current of the numerous ills
Which oft are born of adverse circumstance,
And when they see the hideous phantoms rise,
In shameful humbleness cry, "'Tis God's will."
Wisdom, work on, and teach the multitude
That we, each separate one, are yet so bound
That every law of health that we outrage
Shall wreak its vengeance on us while on earth,
And as a curse down countless ages go.
Be strong, O man ! and cry aloud 'tis I
Who have the power alone to guide my will,
Keep myself pure from evil, and so pass
Unto my children the bright torch of life
Burning with chastened lustre ; mine the power
To teach them to revere the flesh as that
Which gives us consciousness of higher things,
And which, if hurt or maimed with evil deeds,
Will mar the sight of good, as purblind eyes
Dim the bright aspect of earth's loveliest scenes.
So let us work such work that it may live
When we are naught but dust ; then other hands,
Pleased with the gracious edifice, will shape

It into ever a more glorious form.
Man shall not live alone in idleness
For the fulfilment of his own desires,
Scorning the bond of human brotherhood ;
And he who dwarfs his reason by disuse,
And lets his better aspirations rust,
Failing to exercise the higher powers
Of moral sense, shall find these gifts decay—
As in the water world a perfect shape,
Provided with full faculties of life,
By slothfulness is doomed to lose the power
To be an independent entity,
And thus becomes a loathly parasite.
Gentle Gautama ! twice one thousand years
Have gone since thou denounced the sin
Which craves that I should be for ever I.
Oh ! all embracing power, work on, work on :
In secret comes the kingdom that's to come ;
Through me and through thy myriad living forms
Work on until thou gain'st thy perfect state,
And in pure being one we rest with thee.
Though I myself should perish utterly,
And as a broken lute be cast aside
As having played my part, what matters that ?
Although the lute, if the frail strings be snapped,
Is voiceless, yet I never heard it urged,
Because the harmony no longer spoke
From its hushed tones, music could not exist.
Through instruments of rudest form, fashion'd by men
In savage state, did music first resound,
In narrowed range, oft dissonant and shrill.

Those feeble pipes and clanging cymbals now
Are dust, or ranged for curious eyes to view
Upon the antiquary's laden shelves.
Yet by their aid the music of to-day
Has power to soothe our minds, delight our ears,
And thrill our souls until we seem to stand
On some vast height, almost in sight of heaven ;
And thus the harmony of human life
Flows on through instruments for years uncouth,
But slowly gaining greater tone and power,
Until the gamut reaches unto God.
And there will be no need of forms wherewith
To waken harmony, for it shall fill all space,
And each retarded note shall be resolved
Upward into one perfect endless chord :
This is the fabled music of the spheres—
This is the psalm the stars of morning sang.




TWO HOMES.

 HE wind laughed loud around my house :
I bolted fast the door—
“There is no room for you,” said I ;
The wind but laughed the more,
And scoffed—“Small room for aught but thee
Within that house of thine ;
Why don’t you come outside and see
The height and breadth of mine ?”

THE SEASONS.

. PREFACE.



WEET Mother Earth, the voice I raise
Is feeble, and but lisps thy praise.
Forgive me if I oft repeat
My words—I find the theme so sweet—
And should they move some heart in pain
To love thee, they are not in vain :
Who loves thee is for ever blest—
In that pure love the heart finds rest.

JANUARY (FROM THE GARDEN).

FROM the south-west, past silver seas, there rolled
Wave upon wave of hill range, wrapped in gold
Mantle of long dry grass.

Northward they merged, in mists of purple shade,
Where forests clothed the range, and on them laid
The tints of amethyst.

Sometimes among the gold there showed the sheen
Of sun-kissed vines, as brightest emerald green,
From earth of reddish hue.

And in our garden the sweet mandeville,
From a few snowy stars insisted still
Her perfume on the air.

The oleander bloomed, milk white, rose red,
And heavy fragrance, as of almonds, shed
Beneath the fierce sun's rays.

The apricot with amber balls was hung,
The mulberry cast her purple fruit among
Roses that blossomed late.

Upon a path, white with dead gum leaves made,
Bright bodies of dead chafers supine laid,
Six red legs skyward stretched.

The orange lilies glowed with flaunting pride,
The passion flower with Tyrian purple vied,
Cicadas loudly shrilled.

The morning glory hung her bells of blue,
And from their depths the humming brown bees flew,
With amber-freighted thighs.

And through the quivering sapphire-tinted air
The sun's rays fiercely smote, and did not spare
The first-born of the year.



FEBRUARY (FROM THE ORCHARD).

THE gum tree has cast off her coat of green,
'Tis thrown in shreds of sere and tender tone
About her feet : behold her smooth, straight stem,
Clad in a satin sheath of silver hue.
The voice of Tithonus is heard no more :
'Mong fallen bark he lies ; the fierce sun glints
Upon his scarlet eyes and sable suit,
Whilst toiling ants perform his sepulture.
Purple and golden wealth of plums now decks
The orchard out, and the full fruit of vines
Take on rich ruby, gold, or purple hues ;
The fig's broad leaves give shade to stores of fruit ;
On the pomegranate globes of scarlet blaze.
Amber and green the melons on the ground
Among the red love-apples steal, and cast
Their curled green tendrils into bloomy thyme,
Which grows near dark-hued mint and powder'd sage,
Sweet marjoram, and mauve-spiked lavender
And blue-flowered rosemary, among whose spice
The rose-flushed peaches drop. The apricot
No fruit displays among her gold-leaved boughs—
Wan yellow leaves, the ghosts of amber fruit,
Which decked them in the first month of the year.
The crab, the briar, the thorn now laden are
With coral dower. It is the time of wealth
In orchards, and the almond rends her husk,
And from the gaping sheath of sage-green hue
Looks on the harvest with a golden eye.

MARCH (FROM OUR VINEYARD).

'Tis March : among the vines the children laugh,
And all unmindful of the blistering heat,
With many a song and jest unwearied toil.
In dusty vineyard ways the grape carts pass
Loaded with fruit whose dripping sweetness runs
To thirsty earth. The engine pants ; the mill,
A savage monster, crushes in his maw
His juicy prey, whose blood pours down to vats
Of goodly rotund form, and all the air
Is heavy with the scent of new-pressèd wine.
At night, when winds rush fiercely from the hills,
The poet's ear hears laughter and strange shouts
As of processions madly surging past,
Then, lulled by the fierce clamour, sleeps, to dream
'Mong Austral vines, as once on Phrygian plains,
The youthful Dionysius leads his crew
Of fauns and satyrs, ivy-crown'd nymphs,
Whose milky shoulders gleam from dappled hides ;
Awhile he sees the rabble pause in shade
Of tent-like figs, whose boughs are burdened down
By stores of brown or bloomy purple fruit,
And while he peers with curious eyes to view
The naked god in noisy glee set high
Upon the shoulders of the piping Pan,

And note the regal aspect of his car,
Drawn by fierce beasts, now docile, wreathed by thongs
Of ivy and the intertwining vine,
He wakes to hear the magpie's song roll clear
From leafy gullies where the shadows rest,
And notes upon the orchard's grass-clad slopes
The painted apples drop, while to them come
Brown-golden bees to suck their hearts' sweets out.



Bestrews her feet with yellow, which we know
In far Cathay bemoans an emperor dead ;
So 'neath the fruitless tree the earth is stained
With blood of many a mulberry monarch dead.
But, heedless, April passes on, and taps
Her fingers on the walnut's shriv'ling sheath,
Crying, ' Come forth ! ' the green husk parts, and lo !
In russet coat the nut peers out and hears—
' Leap thou and live,' the laughing season calls ;
' Haply unseen by mortal eye thou'lt plant
Thy feet within the May-dewed earth and grow
A tree of goodly size to flourish long.
If seen and gathered, safe and warm thou'lt lie
In well-filled store till winter comes—that time
Thou'lt wed the wine ; while winds loud wail without,
Within, warmed by a leaping fire of logs,
In silver casket set on damask fine
Thou'lt listen to the converse of wise men,
And split with thinking how much wisdom lies
Hid in a small nutshell.' ” All this we note
The Doradillas sing. Now mark the plains,
Veiled by the incense smoke of pungent weed,
Which late o'erspread the fields, but now is burnt,
With bitter sweetness filling autumn's breath.

MAY (FROM OUR GARDEN).

So sweet the air with China's loquat flowers,
The o'erprest sense, striving to bare itself
Unto the full delight of scent and draw
To inmost core of being this rare breath,
Swoons with the joy, but with the perfumed trance
Thrills on, and leads the mind down odorous ways
Unto an Eastern land, full of the thought
Of childish days, and once more on the ear
There falls the jingling of pagoda bells
Or the deep, mournful toll of Kae Sun,
Wailing, "One golden lily has no shoe!"
Once more I list to the enchanting tale
Of those ill-fated lovers who, in blue,
Still tell their woful story in our midst;
And still the perfumed ways lead on by lakes,
Through gardens gorgeous with bright-plumaged birds,
And luscious fruits, and flowers of dazzling hue,
Scarcely more gay than are the brodered robes
Of moon-faced beauties sipping their Bohea
By light of lanterns—'tis the only light
Which falls upon this wondrous, old-time world.
Quaint monsters and the stately peacocks grow
From out clipped hedges. See! there a pageant goes!
It is a night of feasts. Silk banners wave,
Cymbals loud clash, and in bright-coloured fire

Of golden, green, and rose the vision fades ;
Yet surely it has left an after-light,
For still the garden with bright colour glows :
'Tis the chrysanthemums, Cathay's own flowers.
Cathay, rare wonderland of childish years !
Not all the flowers, nor all the costly wares
Of porcelain and of ivory on my shelves
Can bring thee back to me as thou wert then.
May, and they rob Melissa of her hoards.
May, and soft opal-tinted clouds take rest
On the hill's summit—to the zenith mount,
Making the heavens and earth appear
Like some vast altar where an offering
Of incense smoketh up. Is it the fair
Dead bodies of the springtime's withered flowers,
Wet by the balmy dews of length'ning nights,
That give that iridescent vapour out,
Fulfilling Nature's law that what is fair
Should of its fairness bring some fair thing forth ?
May : and the poet's fancy-haunted ear
Hears elfin voices blow the trumpet-flowers,*
Pouring from out their horns of ivory notes
Of perfumed sound unto the moon—their song :
"Diana, mighty huntress, deign to come
And place the scented clarion to your mouth,
And blow from out its od'rous depths a blast
Of such enchanting tone that forth from trees,
And creeks, and gullies there shall come a host
Of Austral dryads—comely, although black—

* The moon-flower (*Brugmansia*).

To join the revels of the southern chase
O'er rounded hills where molten shadow lies
And fills the silver bowls, which day reveals
To be but hollows of dry grass-clad hills."
Or, if in softer mood, so shrill the elves :
" Let Dian take a flower, yet in the bud,
Whose iv'ry melts to chrysoprase, and breathe
A tender lute-like tone, which, echoing
Through silent moon-kissed hills, shall wake from sleep
Endymion, viewing in his dreams once more
Latmos and joys of dear departed days."
" How come the gods of Greece on Austral hills ?"
The angry student cries. The dreamer pleads :
" The bright immortals have no fixed place ;
Their home is in each reverent human heart
Where all fair fancies find a resting-place,
Whether that heart throbs 'neath the polar star
Or pulses with the splendour of the cross."



JUNE (IN THE GARDEN).

Now June, and on the hills a faint fair green
Of this year's grass, beviewing winter's world
Through the loose-woven mesh of last year's straws.
Life-giving life, begirt around by death,
Undaunted into fulness thou wilt grow :
A note made visible of many such
In the vast gamut of the "Will to be."
Now June, and still upon the vineyard slopes,
Sere sallow banners of the autumn fly
From the fast-baring branches of the vines,
And noisy urchins toiling in the yards
Of silver olives pluck from loaded boughs
The purple shining fruit. Now winter gives
The orange deeper glow of colour ; stays
'Neath fragrant lemon trees to hear the voice
Of winged and living jewels—sapphire wrens
And robins with a flaming blood-red vest.
Now June, and in the garden's moss-green'd paths
The winter, lusty gallant that he is,
Greets us with keen and lively kiss, and brings,
As many a lusty gallant has before,
A posy of sweet flowers—spiced mignonette,
The saffron jonquil, purple violet,
And one pale gold-eyed star—a marguerite.

JULY.

FORGIVE me, critics, if my July song
Is but an echo of that poet dear
Whose fame, unlike to mine, shall last as long
As there are eyes to read or ears to hear.

By the fires among the vineyards
You may see the winter kneeling,
Wrapped within a misty mantle ;
To himself he softly singeth—
Singeth of rathe flowering almonds,
Starry blooms, pink sea-shell tinted,
Set against lazulian ether,
On their bronzy boughs, encrusted
With the gems a shower hath thrown there ;
Singeth of his many treasures—
Of the sheoak's amber tassels,
Pale gold bells of swaying sour-sob,
Emeralds of springing corn fields,
Amethyst of distant forest,
Chalcedony of snowy cloud bank ;
Silver streamlets in each gully,
Like bright weapons strong for warfare—
Noble labour's honest warfare.
Hear him singing of his treasures,
As he walks 'mong new-turned furrows
Down the bare rows of the vineyards,
Where the pruner's knife is gleaming.

AUGUST (IN THE BUSH).

IN this fair land, belovèd of the sun,
Short time the clasp of winter doth endure—
A kindly clasp, as father gives to child;
Within his arms the winter father holds
His earth child, tired with summer revels long
And autumn's pageantries. He lays upon
Her bright attendant flowers this charge : Be still
And wake her not, rest in her breast secure,
Enfolded in my keeping ; gather strength.
That rest is broken : primrose bells, set high
On stalks of lucid green above a field
Of emerald cinquefoil leaves, rang out a chime
This very morn ; the almond, on her boughs,
Set myriad stars, to light upon his way
The coming prince, the spring, who now hath kiss'd
His love, and woke her from her sleep to deck
Her naked form with ornaments of gold—
Gold forged of heavy-scented wattle bloom.
Down in the grass the dewed drosera shows
Her small, pale face—a link between two worlds ;
The crimson heather blushes in the hills,
And purple trails of sarsaparilla bend
O'er gemmed Kennedya, flaming on the ground,
While many a token of Arachne's skill
Is shown on vagrant gorse : a hundred lives
Will issue from that small white satin sheath
(A fragile thing the careless eye might deem
To be a loitering ball of thistle down).

SEPTEMBER.

THOUGH spring, the vines have not yet shown one leaf—
At early morn they seem like hieroglyphs
Of some forgotten language on a scroll
Of silver made by frost-bespangled weeds ;
But the warm sun transmutes the frost to gold—
Gold of a million million yellow flowers.*
What mean those brown and twisted hieroglyphs ?
Interpret this strange writing on the earth.
Who runs may read : a little child can tell
This is a sentence of the living Word—
“ Thou seest I can make these dry bones live.”
Behold, upon their bareness comes a faint
And trembling light, which deepens to a ray
Of tender green. Almighty law, we view
Thy miracles and yet are blind to thee :
In winds and streams we hear thy voice, yet cry
Like fretful children at a task severe :
This meaneth naught, we know 'it hath no sense.
Thy presence breathes on the pomegranate boughs,
And they become like fretted scarlet screens
Through which our eyes behold the bloss'ning plums'
White foamy boughs ; and from the glass-bright sea
The western breeze comes, snapping many a lance
Of flame-clad warriors—tall gladiolas ;

* The yellow blossoms of the sour-sob, which cover the vineyard in winter.

Out on the heights the white clematis shakes
Her elf-cap flowers beside the plashing fall,
And at her feet the blue-eyed orchid looks
Unto the sun. The wild japonica
Flashes her vermeil gems from rocky holds,
Beneath whose frowning base the full stream's flow
Mirrors new glories of the hartshorn fern
And the fresh fronds uncurled of maiden's-hair.



OCTOBER (IN THE GARDEN).

CREAM, white, crimson, blush, and golden are the roses
in the garden ;

From sharp, thorny boughs of hawthorn blossom-snow
is softly falling—

Falling often in the rose hearts, fading in that ardent
perfume.

Has the daughter of a king come, wrapped about in
wondrous raiment ?

No, it is the Persian lilac, cloaked in her October
splendours ;

But to suit the royal aspect she has crowds of eager
courtiers :

Butterflies, whose orange vestments make them meet to
serve a princess.

When soft twilight steals the colour from the turquoise-
tinted heavens,

And the air no longer quivers, panting with the ardent
sun's rays,

Still the regal one has suitors to her odorous lilac glories :
From amongst gold broom and jasmine fawn-brown
moths with crimson slashes

On their whirring wings come sipping at her un-
diminished sweetness,

Only leaving her when night creeps, wrapped in dusky
velvet draperies,

Trailing up from ti-tree gullies, rising from mysterious
hollows,

Whence at evening come Koorabra's chords of sound,
with sweet suggestions

Of the glory of the season and the restful peace of
nightfall.

When the dawn comes softly slipping in through boughs
of tall acacias

He again will raise a pæan, flooding all the woods with
music.

Has the flush of dawn still lingered on this fragrant
rose-stained Maythorn ?

Perhaps she blushes at the piping of the thrush whose
nest is builded

High among her spreading branches ; such a song of
passion trills he

All the long day through that surely 'tis no wonder
that this Maythorn

Blushes—aye, in every petal—standing by her snow-
white sisters.

Purple heliotropes are scenting the spring air with
rarest essence ;

Scarlet passion-flowers are flinging on the balcony their
radiance ;

The tall sighing pines are weeping tears of bitter scented
amber ;

And the doves coo in their high tops—all day long the
doves are cooing.

From a million cornucopias, coral-tinted, lined with
yellow,

The o'erladen honeysuckle pours an overpowering odour,
And the month, faint with the incense of the cumulated
fragrance,

Fades from out the summer's triumph, and the fetters of
the gold chain—

Splendid fetters, such as queens wear—fall unheeded on
the grass plot.

Gone art thou, fair flower-crowned season, splendid, per-
fumed, painted maiden ;

Dear thy mem'ry is, October—something to be cherished
always,

Something to be thought of fondly when the fragrance
of thy rose-leaves,

Dried and stored in jars of porcelain, greet us in another
season,

Like the loving thoughts which linger round the mem'ry
of the lost one.



NOVEMBER (IN THE GARDEN).

It is the time when the pomegranate flower
Holds to the sun her ardent scarlet mouth,
And draws within her heart a golden dower
Of shining life-light, and from out the south
The wind from seaward strays and gently rocks
The jewelled spires of stately hollyhocks.

Brilliant geraniums in the garden glow,
The Persian iris mirrors the bright sky,
The olive sheds a ceaseless flower snow,
To cooler haunts the bright-hued robins fly;
Yet ling'ring late, full-hearted roses show,
From out the failing garden loth to go.

The spiced carnation odours the warm air,
Through which run silver quiv'ring lines of heat;
The tall white lilies in their cups upbear
A draught of gold Hymettus' nectar sweet,
Which the black bee marauders bear away,
And painted butterflies to taste delay.

From fields the breeze brings scent of new-mown hay—
Man's harvest this, garner'd with toil and thought,
Tended with care through many a weary day,
Yet oft-times smitten with disease or drought.
Alas! how often is man's harvest grain
Watered with tears and reaped in bitter pain.

Out on the heights all bounteous nature flings

Her treasures to the air, and no man reaps

Saving the dreamer : to himself he sings,

Lying at ease upon the wooded steeps

And looking o'er the slopes of grasses pale,

“No drought but death can make my harvest fail.”



DECEMBER.

ONLY a memory of yellow hills,
Which to the northward sink to wooded slopes ;
Only a memory of winds which came
And shook the tall trees of the garden old,
And as it passed along the sun-kissed vines
Ruffled their leaves till emerald turned to grey,
And dimpled all the surface like a smile ;
Only a memory of seeding grass,
And down of thistles floating in the air ;
Only a memory of myrtle flowers,
Made musical all day by humming bees ;
Only a memory of purple fruits,
Of plums and mulberries staining the long lawn,
Of laden almond trees and blushing peach,
Of flowers which lingered unabashed by heat—
Such is December in our Austral home.

SONG.

THE CURLEW'S CRY.

[Even the least imaginative person, hearing the cry of a flight of curlews, cannot fail to notice the similarity in sound of the first two short notes and then the long-drawn after call to the sentence—"We weep, we weep, weary, weary."]




Y lily-covered billabong,
When evening draws the shadows long,
We weep, we weep, weary, weary.

Where moonbeams bleach the long dry grass,
Flecking its whiteness as we pass,
We weep, we weep, weary, weary.

Through dreary desert wastes untrod,
Where none list to our plaint save God,
We weep, we weep, weary, weary.

THE GOLDEN GIFT.

 DOWN the western sky the crescent moon
 Sailed like a golden boat, and as she sped
 O'er waves of cloud-born foam her radiance cast
 The tints of rainbow on their pearly mists,
 Leaving a shining track to mark her course.

As she descended to that world below
 Whose depths a sister moon rose up to greet
 And with her sink beneath the ocean's breast,
 The mother sea bird on her outspread wings
 Caught the last gleams, and as the darkness fell,
 Scared by the sudden gloom, with eerie cry
 Still closer to her downy nestlings pressed.
 The waves ran to the yellow sand and told
 Their story and rejoiced. "This night," said they,
 "On yonder rocky cape begirt with foam
 A child is born." Ere yet the golden boat
 (Which with her radiance lights this night-bound world)
 Ended her gleaming voyage through the heavens,
 From her bright prow was flung a gift of song
 Sweet as a siren's voice and bright as worlds
 Which wander wrapt in veils of trailing flame :
 It floated to the room where lay the child ;
 Its mother 'plained "The moonlight is too bright."

The gaping nurse close drew the curtain to,
But in the wailing weakling's heart the gift
Had found a home from whence to shine and sing,
Charming the world with its sweet silver voice—
Had found a home from whence its golden light
Shall glow as glows the sun in spring, and make
The earth to bloom with beauty for mankind.
Thus sang the waves—"His childish steps shall stray
Beside our tossing surge, and we will pour
Into his ears strange tales of storm and calm ;
Soft lullabies from lands whose sapphire seas
In soothing languor lap their diamond sands ;
Soft flows of sound caught as we steal by slopes
Wooded by trees which seems to kiss the sky ;
And we will bring the child quaint toys, and rare
Shells, musical with wondrous madrigals
Which mermaids sing when in the mazy dance
By moonlight on the shining sands they glide,
Kissed by night winds, whose amorous hands displace
Their flowing tresses, veiling breasts more white
Than Alpine mountains 'neath untrodden snow ;
To him we'll speak of brave and daring deeds,
Old legends told by fisher-wives to still
Their frightened babes at eve, when angry winds
Rock the rude home. Weird, harp-like tones we'll bring
From gloomy caves which know no voice but ours ;
Sweet bridal songs which float from streams bestrewn
With fragrant petals of bright tropic flowers ;
Songs of the happy loves of brilliant birds
And radiant insects—forms half-scorned by man,
But which a mighty power makes each one seek

His fitting mate, and thus fulfil its laws.
We'll posies bring from gardens of the deep,
Where flowers more strange, and bright as those of earth,
Bloom in fair coral caves where no man walks,
And each shall speak in its own voice to him,
Because the poet's ear is tuned to hear
The voice of God, however shrill and thin
The instrument by which he speaks and tells
The world that he is God—and God is love.
Thus unto manhood shall the poet grow—
Still taught by us shall sing of life and love.
Deathless his verse, for it shall be a cry
Of human passion and of high resolve
Which men shall copy, and his words shall fall
As grains of ripe wheat on the mothering earth,
And raise a harvest of pure lives that has
No fear of canker-worm, or drought, or storm.

His mother was a dreamy fisher-girl,
To whom the sea had told a thousand tales,
More fanciful than those strange legends heard
By driftwood fires on stormy winter nights :
Of gallant deeds by princely heroes wrought,
And lowly maidens raised to high estate.
And much she pondered, as she strayed alone
Beneath the shade of the o'erhanging cliffs,
If such a happy chance would her befall.
The Prince *had* come, her simple mind believed,
When one wild day, wand'ring upon the shore
Seeking for shells to sell in neighbouring towns,
She first beheld a man of noble air :

'Twas one who then held fashion's world entranced
By his rare gifts of music and of song—
Alas ! that gifts divine as these should dwell
In forms whose nobleness is but a snare
To lure and to betray, like the bright light
Which tempts the weary traveller to seek
The haven of some shelter for the night,
Who only follows it to find at last
A stagnant, noisome pool in which he sinks.
So Marguerite —— But why prolong the tale—
The old, old tale of frailty and of wrong.
Where rugged rocks in massive grandeur rise,
Fretting to foam the calm of southern seas,
An aged woman dwelt, her squalid home
A crazy hut of wreckage and of bark ;
And with her lived a child—a little waif,
Cast on the grudging care of the old crone,
Who, seeing future profit in the years
When manhood's strength would aid her thriftless age,
Gave him a shelter and the scanty fare
Which a stray dog might claim from strangers' hands,
But naught of love—that blessed sun, whose rays
Pierce through the clouds of poverty and care,
And with their brightness warm the stricken heart.
For him no tender words or loving smiles
Brought warmth or sunshine to his lonely home ;
But still within his sweet, pure heart there lived
The golden gift—the gift which gives the power
To find in earth and sky a recompense.
The rhythmic cadence of the placid seas,
The tints of sunset skies and starlit nights,

When mystic gems of dazzling radiance shone ;
The pools, beneath whose cool clear water grew
Bright-tinted weeds, where living blossoms spread
Their glowing colours : these were the simple joys
Which filled his gentle heart with sweet content,
Save when to anger roused by cruel taunts
Of jibing children, who would call, " See ! see !
Here comes a ' fly-by-night '—a come with tears !"
Then tell him that his mother was accursed,
That mother he had dreamed was fair and good.
That mother, left to want and shame, had died,
And to her hapless child bequeathed the fate
Which human laws (not justice) have proclaimed—
That such as he shall be accounted base.
How long shall scorn with cruel eyes behold
The guileless victim of another's crime ?
Thus spoke the Gentle Teacher of mankind,
Who through all time shall stand as perfect man—
He who for ever shines as the ideal
Of what we may become : " Woe unto him
Who shall offend one of these helpless ones."
In vain with shud'ring hands we keep our robes
From contact with our brother's tainted garb,
And self-complacent pass ; in vain we ask,
With all the insolence of cursèd Cain—
" Am I my brother's keeper ?" For each moan
Of the oppressed and weakly shall combine
In one dread voice upon the day of doom,
And thunder in our ears the answer, " Yes !"

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Oft through the sounding surge that lapped the shore
His dimpled feet he drew in childish glee,
And dancing sang, "Dear sea, I love you so!"
Then bared his white limbs to the cool sweet air,
And, laughing, rushed beneath the crested waves;
Then, tired with play, would lie upon the sands,
Beneath the red-brown rocks' inviting shade,
In childish wise, his pink knees drawn toward
His chin—his head thrown back upon his hands,
His dark eyes gazing wonderingly at all:
Viewed with delight the golden sand, the foam
Dash o'er the rocks, the ever-restless sea,
Encircled by the distant coast, which showed
Through hazy mists mysterious, undefined.
He watched the seagulls wing their flight at eve
Unto an isle of magic loveliness—
A fairy isle, for so it seemed to be,
Lit by the fires of crimson flame which glowed
From sunset skies through mists of evening dyed
With gold from lingering amber of the West.
Oft would he feign, as is a lone child's wont,
That he was hero of some wondrous tale,
And over humble things a mantle throw
Of bright romance. Thus, till the stars came out
And lit the sky with chill sidereal fires,
Long would he dream and gaze; then wander home,
To be harsh chidden by the fisher-wife,
Who grumbled, in the manner of her kind,
"Why did I take a brat to vex my age?
The neighbours told me I would rue the day—
A thing for ever gadding like the wind."

There, take your bite—I left it by the fire—
And get to bed.” Into his nest of straw
The child would creep, but with no thought of sleep.
The careful eye might mark beneath the fringe
Of jet upon his cheeks a gleam of light,
Which fled when the old wife came near his bed ;
But when she slept the fringe of jet was raised
And the dark eyes, through the uncurtained panes,
Watched the white clouds trail o’er the moon and rest
In forms fantastic on the purple sky.
Lulled by the ceaseless threnody of waves
Mourning to rocky capes, the child would sleep,
And dream about the mother whom he *knew*
Was beautiful and good—would dream that she
Came to his bed and raised him in her arms,
Pillowed his head upon her breast, and called
Him tender names ; would wake to see the dawn
Press with chill hands about the narrow pane,
To hear the gull’s harsh scream, and harsher voice
Of the old wife grumbling the morning’s breath
Was bitter cold and brought her aches and pains.

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Years passed : the child, now grown a lusty lad,
Went with the boats, and in the town sold fish,
And dainty dames in carriages would halt,
Bidding him take the fish unto their homes,
And gazing on his manly form would ask
Themselves why beauty such as his should dwell
In one of common mind and basely born,
Then sigh and wish that Nature had vouchsafed

To them an heir cast in such noble mould.
Within the boy's pure heart the moon's gift lay,
Warmed with his life, and growing as he grew
Became a source from which his spirit drew
His sense of justice, and of purpose strong,
And the vexed question long he pondered on—
Why in a world where nature seemed so fair,
And all things showed the tender care of God,
Should man alone be tangled in the mesh
Of sins which taint his mind and wreck his soul?
And, restless with the all-recurring theme,
When in the violet sky down dropped the moon
He rose and wander'd to his love, the sea,
And linger'd till he saw bright Phœbus tear
From eastern skies the shrouding veils of mist
And in his warm arms clasp the blushing dawn.
One starless night, when on the rock-girt shore
The waves with scarce a sound rolled o'er the sand
And all the sultry air was filled with gloom,
A brooding sadness which his heart opprest
Led him to wander forth in sore unrest :
For he that Sabbath morn, as was his wont,
To service at the village church had gone—
A moss-stained building, rude and unadorned,
With rough-hewn rafters, where the happy birds
Built, loved, and reared their nestlings free from fear
Of pious worshippers, who deemed it wrong
That such should so profane the sacred place ;
Bright, happy birds, whose carols reached to heaven,
And surely found acceptance far beyond
The canting hymns that men have dared to raise,

Breathing of vengeance and the flames of hell.
Without the trees tapped on the latticed panes
And waved their branches to a sapphire sky,
And dropped sweet petals on the graves which lay
About their roots—all, all seemed peace and love,
Save the fierce creed which thundered forth the doom
Of everlasting woe, and, therefore, *just*—
“For,” said the preacher, “ye are born in sin.”
And thus the dreamer’s thoughts in protest spoke—
“No ! pure and undefiled the gift of life
To all is given alike, but through all time
Have evil passions and their deeds of sin
Effaced the image of his God in man.”
And as a lovely garden soon becomes
A wilderness of thorns and noxious plants—
The produce of the deadly, baleful seeds
Which evil hands have wantonly cast in—
So when with careful hands we till the soil
And pluck from out the flowers the choking weeds
Once more its precincts “blossom as the rose.”
So shall man’s soul, kept pure and free from sin,
Return unto his God who gave him life
In very likeness of his form divine.
And he that lives thus shall behold thee now
In all thy beauty and in all thy power,
And in thy works shall recognize the hand
That points “from Nature up to Nature’s God.”
Oh ! clouded eyes of man, canst thou not see
And tread the paths which lead thee unto God ?
Blessed the pure in heart, for they shall be
Fitted to dwell with Him for evermore.

So live, and with thy purer hands lift up
The fallen and the tempted, and thus teach
Each one to hold himself as 'twere a cup
Of rare device wherein God hath stored
Thy life-stream, which, if pure, one day shall shine
With brighter radiance than the jasper sea,
Which the inspired prophet dreamed he saw
Laving the throne of an Almighty God.
Thus would the lad long commune with himself,
Then turn to reading in some learned book
Lent to him by a man who lived alone
In a rude chamber roughly hewn from rock
And thatched with reeds and wreckage from the sea—
A man the townsfolk all accounted mad,
And said with evil spirits he conferred,
And that his books were full of magic arts.
These were the lad's delight ; from them he learned
More knowledge than is ofttimes gained by those
Who toil for years in college or in school.

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So grew the lad to manhood, and his strength
A willing help to others oft he gave
To lift the burden of their daily toil.
And still the children followed in his steps,
No longer vexing him with scornful gibes,
But eagerly beseeching him to tell
About the mermaids who came up at night
And combed their tresses with a golden comb,
And ask him why he did not try to steal
A golden comb, for then he might be wed

To one of these fair maidens of the sea.
“It is quite true,” one round-eyed youngster said,
“For grandad’s father, coming home one night,
Had seen the mermaids dancing on the sands,
And clutched at least a dozen golden combs ;
But those deceitful damsels came to him,
And wept such tears they almost had him drownèd—
That was the reason he was found next morn,
Wet with salt water, laid upon the beach,
But nowhere could be found the golden combs.”
“And sister says,” another urchin cried,
“That if one very handsome in his looks
Blindfolds himself and backward walks to where
The mermaids dance he always finds a comb.”
“Perhaps,” said one small maid with sweet blue eyes,
“As he’s so handsome, they might take him home,
And show him their bright shells and coral caves.”
“List, and I’ll sing to you,” the dreamer said,
And in a wondering group they all stood round.

THE SUNSET SONG.

Out in the saffron west the dying day
With crimson banners flashed,
And round the red-brown rocks where shadows lay
The beryl water plashed.

High on the upper heaven of palest hue
Soft little cloudlets prest
Like curlèd feathers of the roseate hue
Which clothe the robin’s breast.

The mists of evening and the purple heather
Gloom'd o'er the upland fells,
And through the palpitating violet ether
Sounded the vesper bells.

Like to a radiant ray of adoration
Trembled the evening star,
While in a voice of dreary lamentation
White sea birds called afar.

"We do not like your song," the children said.
"Now tell us something all about a bear
That growled and bit and ate the people up."
So he attuned his theme to suit the taste,
And told about a bear, but 'twas not one
Of savage appetites and uncouth ways,
But one whom magic kept in that rude guise—
Magic, which fled before the wand of love.
The night trailed softly o'er the sea's calm breast,
And mother voices called the children home;
Then in the heavens appeared the changing scroll,
The golden hieroglyphs, which men call stars.
Slowly the dreamer walked to where a gleam
Of light showed the half-opened door of him
Who dwelt in the rude cabin hewn from rocks.
The door creaked noisily as the youth stepped
Upon the threshold, and the old man raised
A face distraught as by some evil fear:
"Come near, and hear the story of my life—
I feel the time has come to make it known,"
He cried, in accents sharpened by despair.

"I suffer justly, for the deed I did
Was first conceived and then matured by me :
This is the barb which rankles in my breast.
I cannot lull my guilty mind to rest,
Saying a devil was the cause of this.
'Twas I myself gave to inferior sense
The guiding rein and drugged my mind to sleep.
Long years have passed since then, but still, my son,
I look from out this squalid home and think
Sometimes upon the foaming wave at night
There flies a phantom faint : an awful fear
Clutches my heart, and in my anguish I
Strive to cry out and bid the phantom stay.
Only the night winds moan a low reply,
Only the rustling shiver of the reeds
Brushed by the upward flight of circling swans.

"'Twas Christmas time in England, and the years
Fifty in number have gone down Time's falls
Since I beheld her standing in the hall
Waiting to greet her husband and his guest—
That guest myself, an honoured, trusted friend.
She bent toward me, placed her hand in mine.
What trick of fancy made the paneled walls,
The portraits of her husband's ancestors,
The trophies of the chase and suits of steel,
The fauns and satyrs grinning from black beams,
The blazing logs which threw a ruddy glow
On the tiled hearth—where Isaac's servant met
Rebecca at the well, where Sarah mocked,
Where Joseph's brethren bowed themselves to earth

And hailed their once despised brother great :
What trick of fancy made these seem to fade
Into a half-remembered dream of far-off days ;
And gazing in her eyes, with hands close clasped,
No longer stood we on an English hearth,
Hedged by the cold decrees of English forms,
But under Syrian suns, within the courts
Of Solyman, we strayed, and her mouth, red
As a pomegranate bud, was pressed to mine.
Faint with the sunlight, we sought out the shade
Of palms, and watched the peacocks strut along
The lily-bordered edge of the clear pools,
Within whose water flashed the golden fish.
This vision lasted but a moment. Then
With words of welcome spoke my kindly host—
'What joy it gives me to behold once more
Your father's face. In you I see again
The dear companion of the old glad days,
And ever to my mind his memory brings
The high ideal of a man whose life
Is spent in honour and in noble deeds.
But I forget your journey has been long,
And you must rest awhile. Come, see your room.'
And when we gained it—'You ne'er met before
My dear young wife? What think you of my choice?'
His senile pride of being owner of a girl so fair
Showed in his face. I coldly answered him—
'You have good fortune ; she is wondrous fair.
Have you a child?' He quickly answered, 'No,
Nor ever wish to have. May God avert
That evil from us'—and then turned away.

I marvelled somewhat at this bitter speech,
But so bewildered was my mind with thoughts
Of the girl's fairness, all else seemed as naught.
As night passed on, she took her lute and sang :
Simple the words, but with a pathos rare,
As one who mourned the loss of her beloved.

‘ They tell ’tis summer time.

Again the lime doth throw
To happy lovers, as they pass
Over the flower-enamellèd grass,
Its fragrant blossom snow.

‘ My love, ’tis winter time,

And on thy grave, below
The lime tree which in summer cast
Its fragrant blossoms as we passed,
There falls but winter snow.

‘ But in this heart of mine,

And on thy grave, below
The fragrant lime, in every time
There rests cold sorrow’s snow.’

“ And as she sang her husband sat and smiled :
Methought it seemed the boastful pride of one
Who said—‘ Behold, this youth and loveliness
Are mine alone.’ And thus in far-off years
My fancy told me I had seen the king,
The aged and almost palsied Solyman,
Gaze on a maid, a lovely captive brought
From other lands. And now as then my heart

Cried out—‘Not Solyman nor other man
Shall claim thee his—mine only shalt thou be.’
And still the dream went on, that on one night
When Syrian stars gemmed all the sky and wrought
The azure tapestry with golden flowers,
Across the courts to perfumed gardens came
The captive maid, with backward looks that spoke
Of fear, till safe within my arm she crept,
And hand in hand we wandered in the shade
The palms and cedars of the garden threw.
Alas ! how quickly on those happy nights
The golden flowers faded on the sky.
Again this vision passed. The husband said—
‘I have some letters I must write to-night;
I leave you for my wife to entertain.’
I cannot tell what impulse prompted me :
‘Do you remember Syrian nights ?’ I said,
And straightway told her of the fevered dream
Which had kept coming to me since we met.
‘She gazed upon me with wide open eyes,
Which seemed to look into my own with fear
And eager questioning ; and thus perplexed,
In hesitating accents, slowly spoke :
‘And is it really true, no mocking dream,
That we were lovers in that Syrian land ?
Ah, yes ! ’tis true, for I too sometimes dream
That once I was beloved by one who made
My life all happiness and earth as heaven,
And when you speak I seem to hear his voice.
Oh ! can I now believe that pitying heaven
Thus grants my prayer, and in you once again

His spirit dwells and loves me as before.'
She ceased, and o'er her lovely face there came
A look of ecstasy and full content,
Which quickly passed as whispering low she breathed—
'Hush, for he comes, the tyrant Solyman.'

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"I will not linger o'er the shameful tale,
Nor shock your ears with all its base details—
The devilish arts my traitor's mind devised,
Under the cloak of wisdom to instil
And foster in her mind the thought that I
Was her dead lover reincarnated.
Why dwell upon the record of my sin,
The stolen interviews, the false pretence,
And all the meanness which such guilt entails
In the fulfillment of its base desires?
Within that house I sojourned many weeks.
'We cannot spare you yet,' the husband said;
'Your father's friend has got the right to keep
His old friend's son, and make good use of him
To help him to decipher crabbed words
His failing eyesight cannot grapple with.'
So I stayed on. One night as we were set
Together by his study fire, a look
Of pain passed over his noble face as he,
In trusting confidence, his troubles told:
'Did you not wonder when I said no child
To us was given, and that I trusted God
Would never let such evil me befall?
The reason is: my fair young wife is mad;

I did not know this when I wedded her ;
Her cunning people hid the truth from me ;
My riches tempted them. All I knew
Was that she fretted for a lover drowned.
Her madness is not one of violent mood
So far as I have seen, but perfect rest
And freedom from excitement must be hers,
Physicians tell me. Often fancies wild,
Pertaining mostly to the spirit world,
Possess her, but I drive these thoughts away
By luring her to sing or work some toy
Of costly handkerchief in woman's wise.
Gentle she has been ever hitherto.
May God in mercy heal her, is my prayer.'

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"I could not answer : horror and remorse
So filled my breast that as a leaf I shook,
And hid my ashen face with trembling hands.
'I thank you for your sympathy, dear friend ;
I know—although you say not so in words—
You feel compassion that so fair a form
Holds but a wrecked and darkened mind within.
When first you came I marked a happy change,
And much I hoped that my unceasing care
At last had brought her troubled spirit rest.
Alas ! such happiness is mine no more,
For in her eyes again I see the sign
Which ever ushers in that fearful doom.'

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“Next morn he met me on the stairs, and said :
‘The evil that I feared came in the night.
Alas ! my friend, this is no place for you.’
I strove to falter some regretful words,
And said I would complete translation of
A Sanskrit scroll, then go my way—that day
Would see the task fulfilled. He thanked me much.
That night as late beside the study fire
Alone I sat, still toiling at the scroll,
A shadow fell between me and the fire—
A shadow which had scarlet lips, and eyes
That shone with lurid light. It was the wife.
She laughed, and stooping, whispered : “Come,
Together let us go to Syrian lands ;
But first come with me to where Solyman
Waits us, to bid him a long, long good-bye.”
She led me out along the corridors,
And I, to calm her, followed where she led.
She reached the chamber where her husband lay
Upon a couch, his face turned from the light.
Outworn with watching, he had gone to rest ;
Awhile : to rest—aye, till eternity !
‘Farewell !’ she cried, ‘Farewell to Solyman :
His life has paid the penalty of mine,
Snatched from me underneath the Syrian stars.
Love, let us haste—within each other’s arms
We’ll live again those happy, happy hours.’
I rushed from that dread room as nearly mad
As she who in her frenzy did that deed !

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“What penitence can cleanse my guilty soul?
What prayers or sacrifice atone for sin?
But hear my punishment: From that dread hour,
Between me and the work I labour at
There comes her form—not spectral or severe,
But decked with every female blandishment;
And when I fain would rove upon the heights
Of wisdom, down in dusky vales of sense
She draws me in an enervating dream.
I, on whose word once men enthralled hung;
I, who had almost plucked the secrets out
From Nature’s heart and laid its wisdom bare,
Sink down abased to mediocrity.
The direst curse that could have fallen on me
Is keen ambition without power to soar.
No work of mine will ever live—no deed
Be marked apart from that dull senseless herd
Who eat, drink, laugh, beget, and go a round
Of dull content, and in oblivion sleep.
Go forth,” he cried, in anger. “Tell this tale,
And say, ‘The driv’ling madman told it me.’”
He ceased, exhausted by his fiery words.
Then on his bed, turning his face from sight,
Himself he flung in sullen mood, nor spoke
In answer to the dreamer’s questioning
If he would eat the meal he had prepared.
So, having builded up the fading fire,
The youth in silence left the wretched hut,
And the dark Night enwrapt him in her arms.

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There was no moon. The widowed Night crept in
Among the trees and wailed her loss. She sought
Far in the rocky caverns of the shore,
Deep in the depths of ocean plunged, and cried—
“My love is surely here! Delayed by some
False syren of sweet song, who keeps him from
My arms and lulls him to forgetting sleep.”
Through the dark halls of the dim water world
Swiftly she went, caught at by hideous things
Of awesome shapes and clammy, noisome touch.
She rose unto the surface of the sea,
Which, fretted by her sad and passionate sighs,
Foamed high and muttered sullenly and long.
She clamoured loud at doors and lattices
Of the poor homes upon the cliffs, where sat
The frightened women folks, whose men were gone
Out with the boats. What time one rose and peered
From out the door half-op’d, the Night rushed in,
Shouting, “A light is here! Here is my love!”
Unto her dark breast caught the feeble flare,
And with her fierce sighs quenched it utterly,
Then crouched in corners of the room until,
Lighted by trembling hands, a taper gleamed.
Then she rose up and passed with silent feet
From out the poor abode, and through the wastes
Of tortured, shrieking air went wailing on:
“’Twas a false light! Where is my love, the Moon—
Chandra, whose wont it is to sleep on slopes
Of purple mountains’ breasts, to which I steal
And veil his glory with my dusky hair.
Chandra! my love, who comes with golden feet

To meet me in the valley's leafy bowers ;
And on my garments where the dewdrops rest
A thousand gems are flashing when he smiles ;
Chandra ! who presses through the inky waves,
And with his glittering presence lights their depths ;
Chandra ! who steals into the sounding caves
In which I lie and watch his bright arms stretch
Into the dim recesses of the grot
To clasp me close ! Chandra ! my light, my love."

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"The sea runs high, and dark the night," they said
Who anxious watched the storm-clouds gathering fast.
"Would God," one cried, "a light would come to show
The danger of the rocks—'twould save our men."
E'en as she spoke, above the sea there flashed
A strange unearthly brightness, shining far :
It showed the boats beating their homeward way,
Passing the cruel danger of the rocks.
A cry of joy went up from women who
So late had sorely wept. They clacked—"Let's go
Unto the beach to meet our men. Old Gran
Will tend the pot and fire, and see the bairns
Lie in their beds—they all are broad awake."
With lanterns gleaming bright adown the path
Trending along the cliff unto the shore
They came, babbling each one at once, "What meant
That light of wondrous brightness?" One averred
It was a falling star ; another that
The moon had rent the clouds. One said it was
An answer to her prayers. At this loud laughed

The others—jesting : “ How about the fish
You sold up in the town, and swore ’twas fresh—
Aye, fresh at three days old.” The boats came on
Through the fierce surf—were beached, and joy
Was there as each man came to meet his wife
Or lass. Into the circle of the light
Pressed one whose pale face bore the marks of grief
And sin. “ Where is the lad ?—the only one
Amongst ye all who gave me kindly word,
Or strove to lift me from my mire of shame.
Where is the lad who, by his kindly life,
Put all you smug-faced canting ones to shame.”
“ Hear preacher Meg,” jeered one ; another, “ Hence,
Bold wench, the likes of thee should not push in
On honest folk who thank God and are glad
They have been spared the wretched death of him
Of whom thou speakest, praising overmuch.
What time we neared the danger of the rocks,
The lad who ne’er of late went to a church ;
The lad who said that fevers were not sent
By special will of God, but rather were
From drink and dirt ; the lad who held himself
Aloof and seemed to think us of a kind
Too mean for him—for him, the basely born :
That lad, I say, when we were near the rocks
Laid by his oar, saying his arm was hurt—
A weakling fool. Then muttered to himself
‘ The weight’s too great ; if deeds are noted, then
Let sacrifice avail and save those left.’
Doubtless he’d heavy load upon his mind—
It must be so with one who owns no God ;

And those who go not to a church ne'er thrive.
A wave came, not o'er great—it struck the boat—
It passed—the lad was gone ; then came a light
Which showed us plain the way. No doubt he was
A Jonah in our midst." One woman said,
"He was a kindly lad ; he tended to
My bairn when it was sick—aye, aye, the bairns
Will miss him : the poor lad would wander hours
Upon the shore, and tell them tales." One lass
Cried out, "Look, look ! there's blood upon the boat."
"We have no hurt," the men all said. "Could it
Have been the lad ?" "Aye," wailed the woman Meg,
"See where the rowlocks here are bended in :
Belike it tore his arm ; he rowed till spent,
Then from the boat cast out his weight that ye
Might live to see your wives and bairns again.
It was the will of God that ye should have
The time to yet repent of all your sins ;
God sent His angel, and it bore him home."
"Peace, wench," one cried, and silence fell on all.
The waves ran to the yellow sands ; they told
Their story, they bemoaned and cried : "This night
By yonder craig of rock the Poet died—
Died that his fisher mates might live and see
Once more the light of home, and laughing eyes
Of wife and babes. Saw ye, ye yellow sands,
That glow which filled sea, skies, and earth with light ?
It was the golden gift of poesy and song that winged
Its homeward flight from out the poet's heart.
Little he sang : the time had not yet come—
The gift had glowed, but had not lit to flame.

Alas ! for him the light shall shine no more,
Nor bard's nor poet's heritage of fame
Shall triumph o'er the baseness of his birth,
And with its glory gild his tarnished name."
Then thus the night winds in soft murmurs spoke,
For the rude tempest's fury now was quelled—
" Mourn not, O waves ! the loss of fame : to him
The golden gift brought recompense beyond
The shallow tribute of mankind's applause.
His was the poet's soul, which commune held
With all things beautiful on earth or heaven.
The waving trees, the clouds, the blooms of spring,
The blush of morning and the sunset sky,
And all the lovely works of Nature made
His spirit glad, and with their sanctity
Filled his pure mind and led his thoughts to God.
No mind debased nor talents rusted o'er
By evil practices or selfish aims
Clouded the brilliance of the golden gift,
Which with a purer radiance shone this night
Than when, just twenty years ago, it fell
Into the heart of the unwelcome babe."



A VOICE IN THE VINEYARD.



HERE is a voice among the vines: "Come forth,"

It cries, "and know I have elected thee
To sing my songs—not of the barren north,
But of the fertile south: the loves of bee

And flower, the lang'rous mist-veiled lights

That golden gleam within my April eyes,
The passioned perfume of October nights,

The splendid pageant of the spring, that dies
Within November's amorous embrace,

The while her dirge the piping locust shrills.
Sing thou the change upon my sun-kissed face—

A full-voiced harmony of plains and hills—
Wan near to whiteness with satiety

Of sunlight's wine unstintingly outpoured,
While from the zenith in mad riot flee

The wanton, breathless, heated hours toward
The sea, which, like a blade of steel, safeguards

The brilliant treasure of my turquoise sky,
Where, as the night draws on, the gold star sards

Above the onyx amethyst will lie.

Sing thou the praises of my thin-voiced creeks,


Where scented ti-tree and wild myrtle grow ;

Bring thou their odours unto each who seeks
Thy pages. Let them hear the waters flow,
Show them the rain-fly's * colours in the sun,
The burnished radiance of the chafer's wing,
The bright-eyed lizards as they startled run.
Sing them the melody the wild birds sing.
Thou canst not do this ?—then thou know'st me not ;
Thy song would picture me a phantom pale.
The sapless leaf from off the vine will rot,
The unquickened grape flower on the vine must fail."

* The dragon fly.



JONAH AND THE WHALE.


 ONAH heard a voice keep saying :
 " To Tarshish you must go ;"
 But he said—" No, I'm for Nineveh—
 Tarshish is much too slow.
 In Nineveh there are charming girls
 And all so fond of me
 They work me shoes in greens and blues,
 And ask me home to tea ;
 But in Tarshish my wife's ma hangs out,
 An awful female she,
 She'd telegraph it home at once
 If I got on the spree."
 The neighbours all agreed 'twas sad
 That he should thus go wrong,
 And urged him to his duty
 With arguments most strong.
 " Now, Jonah, go to Tarshish
 Or you'll get finely slated."
 But he would *not* go to Tarshish,
 For the reason that's been stated.
 " Now, Jonah, go to Tarshish
 Or else you'll go to ——." Well,
 He did not go to Tarshish,
 And this is what befell :

He booked himself by the Nineveh boat

That leaves the quay at four ;

He'd fifteen hats, ten pairs of boots,

And of white ties a score ;

He'd a hundred masher collars,

And all things spick and span,

For, like Shierlaw of Hindley-street,

He said—" Clothes make a man."

The neighbours shook their heads and said—

" What need of all those togs ?

It's very plain to us, indeed,

He's going to the dogs."

" Hi, Jonah, guess you're on the mash ! "

His boon companions said.

" Hi, Jonah, going for a spree ? "

But Jonah shook his head.

" I'm going to Nineveh to preach,"

The prophet made reply ;

His boon companions only coughed,

And said—" Indeed ! oh my ! "

His wife said—" What's in all those trunks,

They've just come from the tailor's."

Said he—" My dear, it's mostly tracts

To give unto the sailors.

The tailor's also agent for

Religious publications—

I always take some with me when

I visit foreign nations."

He had a fizz and oyster lunch,

And was starting for the pier.

(Fizz always make one feel the thing,
And so does bitter beer)
When his wife cried, "Jo, only think !
You've never kissed the baby !
I'll fetch her." "Jove," the prophet cried,
"Grant that asleep she may be."
At last he *did* get started.
His faithful wife just would
Insist on seeing him on board—
He said she was *too* good.
Rude little boys upon the pier
Cried, "My ! here comes a dude ;"
I'm sure no little modern boy
Would be so very rude.
But this was a long time ago.
When all the world was young,
Before the days of jubilees,
Polo, or chewing gum ;
Also those little vulgar boys
Cried, "My ! there's been a fire,"
Which, very properly, indeed,
Excited Jonah's ire.
I grieve to state they shouted—
"Oh, my ! here comes a don,
And fal, lal, la, and la, di, da,
My stars ! he's got 'em on."
The prophet got on board at last :
His wife stayed on the pier ;
She said she would not go on board
For fear of feeling queer ;
So she made him stay up on the deck,

Although the wind was high ;
And from the pier she shouted—
“ Jo, dear, be sure you try
Mamma’s own mix of onions roast
If you should get the cramp,
And wear your woollen vest in bed
For fear the sheets are damp.
Oh, pray be careful of yourself—
Beware of railway shocks,
And if you chance to wet your feet
Be sure you change your socks.
Now mind and wear your flannels,
And don’t forget your g’loshes ;
And, Jonah, let me beg of you,
Don’t take too many squashes.
Put on your mitts—it’s dreadful cold—
And keep up your umbrella.”
“ Oh, bother take it all,” said he,
“ Don’t smother up a fellar.”
“ And always wear that comforter,
’Twas knitted all by me.”
“ Oh, yes,” he said—(and then, aside),
“ I’ll pitch it in the sea.”
“ Now, are you sure you are not cold,
You’d like my boa perhaps.”
“ My dear,” he growled, “ I’m bored enough
Beneath this weight of wraps.”
Then basely muttered—“ Bother her,
To make me such a figure ;
If I’m seen thus in Nineveh,
Those charming girls *will* snigger.”

“ Be sure,” his wife once more began.

The captain said, “ Why, bless us,
I’ll have to charge an extra freight
On cargo that’s so precious.”

The whistle blew ; Jo’s wife cried, “ Dear,
Now don’t sit in a draught.”

Jo something said beneath his breath,
The crew and skipper chaffed.

The ship at length it started off ;

There was a heavy swell,
And Jonah looked a trifle off,
Waving his last farewell.

“ Farewell !” cried he ; a last farewell !

“ Good-bye !” the last injunction ;

Then was not slow to go below,

And straight, without compunction,
Tore off his muffler and his mitts,

And lest they should be brought whole
To land by tide he rent them wide

And flung them through the porthole.

Thus fared also the hated g’losh,

And thus the Gamp umbrella ;

“ Now, then,” cried Jonah, “ for a squash—
I’ll feel another fellar.”

Scarce had the nimble steward gone

To fetch Jo’s S. and B.,

When there began what sailors call

A chopping of the sea.

The vessel it rocked up and down,

And eddied round and round ;

Jo rushed on deck and cried, “ I fear

That I shall be dead drowned.”
The skipper said a wicked word,
He hitched his knickerbockers ;
“ Belay,” he cried, “ or we’ll sail down
To Davy Jones’s lockers !”
All Jonah’s lightness of the heart
Had left him quite by now ;
He sat apart upon the deck
And vowed this solemn vow :
“ If ever I get back to land,
I’ll be so awful good.”
“ Perhaps you will,” the captain said,
“ Or, rather, p’raps you would ;
But I suspect as you’re the cause
Of this here strange commotion—
Prophets, nor cats, was never built
To sail upon the ocean.
Now I’ll toss up this tanner :
If the head’s up when it fall,
Well, then, I’ll take it this is
An ordinary squall ;
But if the tail come uppers,
Ill luck, then, us environs,
And overboard you’ll go at once
To preach unto the sirens.”
The prophet did not look so pleased
As might have been imagined ;
In fact, all those on board agreed
He looked extremely chagrined.
He trembled ; his teeth chattered—
“ I’m a holy man,” he screams ;

The captain unpolitely said,
 "Tell that to the marines."
He also said, "Them mermaid gals
 Will think you something grand ;
They must be tired of ocean's swells—
 Now, you're a swell from land ;
And down below it's very calm—
 None of this agitation—
So you can settle down at once
 To tea and mild flirtation."
The prophet, all unsolaced,
 But ruffled up his curls—
Does the skipper know of Nineveh,
 And those most charming girls ?
Ah, yes, he's jeering me, thought Joe,
 I'll try and come the good :
"I could not do such things," gasped he
 " 'Twould be most wrong I should ;
I never even heard before
 That curious word flirtation."
The skipper made a gesture here,
 Vide the illustration.
And up he spun the tanner,
 With a jovial one, two, three.
"It's tails," he cried ; "I thought as much ;
 Now *you* go in the sea."
The storm was at a fearful height,
 The wind great guns did blow.
"Bring out his traps," the skipper cried—
 He'll want a grand 'trousseau.'
The crew brought out his boxes,

They overboard were thrown,
And then they chucked out Jonah,
Who loud did screech and groan ;
And as he struck the ocean
The storm at once was gone,
And pleasantly and merrily
The vessel now sailed on.
Now all this fuss had taken place
Not one mile from the pier—
So people strolling on the beach
Saw what had happened clear.
Jo's faithful wife, who'd stayed to watch
The vessel out of sight,
Regardless of the cold she'd catch,
Stood paralyzed with fright.
And lone and sad the lady felt,
And sadder felt and loner,
As she saw a most tremendous whale
Put itself outside of Jonah.
Then all at once she found her voice,
And cried, in tones of woe,
"Oh, hold it ! hold it ! hold it !
Hold it by the tail !
It's swallowed up my darling Jo !
That dreadful, awful whale !"
And all the little Jonahs,
Who were paddling on the beach,
Each lifted up its little voice
As loud as it could screech,
Crying, "Hold it ! hold it ! hold it !
Hold it by the tail !

It's got outside our dear papa,
That horrid, nasty whale !"
And from the cliff the tailor,
Who had been watching Jonah sail,
Yelled, " Jorah's rig ain't paid for—
Oh, hold it by the tail !
It's swallowed up a customer—
Oh, drat that horrid whale !"
In vain, in vain they shouted :
The whale swam gaily on ;
Once playfully it spouted,
Then dived and straight was gone.
The boxes floated to the shore ;
Mrs. Jonah had them oped,
And when she saw their vain contents
With anger she near choked !

Now let us turn to Jonah.

Pray, what were his sensations ?
In vain he argued with the whale—
It heeded no orations.
Alas ! alas ! for Jonah,
Alas ! poor luckless elf,
'Twas no use spouting to the whale,
For it could spout itself.
" Hold hard ! hold hard ! " cried Jonah,
" This pace can never last."
" Aha ! indeed," the whale replied,
" It surely ain't too fast ;
You've faster gone in Nineveh,
I'll bet my boots on that ;

If we outrun the constable
 You can pass round the hat."
So on and on they wrangled,
 And Jonah never rested ;
The whale at last took violent cramps,
 And owned that he was bested.
" Prophets," said he, " like sermons be,
 They cannot be digested,"
And straight they parted company :
 This is a true narration—
As to how they parted company,
 Please see the illustration.
The whale was not considerate—
 It left him on an island—
But Jonah very thankful felt
 To be on any dry land.
Some fishers passing in a boat,
 They took him to the mainland,
He'd felt uneasy while afloat,
 And was most glad to gain land.
" And now," said he, " I will reform :
 This minute I'll go home,
Become domesticated, and
 I never more will roam."
But as the sage doth tell us
 In men's affairs a tide is,
If taken at the flood, by it
 Good fortune's gate oped wide is.
But Jonah's tide of fortune
 Had ebbed and left no good,
As Jonah clearly realized


And plainly understood
When unto his own house he came,
And standing at the door,
Behind his wife, as large as life,
He saw his ma-in-law.
I will not dwell on painful scenes,
Nor mention what was said ;
The neighbours heard both sobs and screams,
And Jonah ducked his head.
His ma-in-law stayed always there,
She *never* went away ;
Jonah grew sad, and thin and bald—
He left off being gay.

MORAL FOR BENEDICTS.

Young men in matrimony's chains,
As ye cannot divest of them,
Learn to put up with all its claims,
And try to make the best of them,
Resolve to live a quiet life,
And don't deceive your wedded wife.



AHASUERUS.

 ASHTI being disposed of, the people said
 They thought that the king should certainly
 wed.
 The king declared that he found life jolly—
 He didn't care for Jinny or Polly.

Why should he bother forming a rash tie
 After the scrimmage he'd had with Vashti ?
 The king's mamma was both listless and cross,
 For now she'd no daughter-in-law to boss,
 To whom she could tell that sweet story old
 Which daughters-in-law have ever been told,
 That " My darling boy he looks sorter lone,
 And not so chirk as when living at home.
 Ah ! he'll find that there's never another
 Will do for him same as his poor old mother."
 " But," said the queen, " Son, don't marry just yet,
 I never did see such a useless set
 Of girls about, with such shiftless ways.
 Ah ! it wasn't so in my young days !
 But I'll look around and sort 'em over,
 And see if really I can discover
 A sensible, tidy, and decent lass—
 One given to work, and not to sass."
 The king thanked his ma with the humblest humility,

Said he was sure she'd the ablest ability
To manage the task which she'd taken upon her.
That night at the club he remarked—" 'Pon my honour,
I guess by the time that lass has been found
You and I, dear old chaps, will be under the ground."
The dear chaps addressed much "old man," and "old
boyed " him,

And begg'd he'd think often ere being decoyed in
And tied in the dread matrimonial noose,
Which makes the most jolly old chappie have blues.
"I'm aware," said the king, "not one damsel would
linger

If I were to only just hold up my finger ;
But, no—my dear boys—I am not to be had."
Did I hear some fair one say, " Horrible cad ? "
Oh no, he was not, for in that distant age
You cannot expect that a man would be sage.
How happy are you, girls, who live in dominions
Where I'm sure that no man would hold such opinions,
And would not most certainly use such expressions,
No matter how lordly might be his possessions.
The king then continued—" I've heard that some feller,
And if I mistake not his name it was ' Weller,'
Said the greatest discomfort most usually hid is
In that class of ladies he mentioned as ' viddies ; '
But I say if really you'd live at your ease,
Beware of all sorts and conditions of shes."
The historian tells us that those he addressed
By this peroration were greatly impressed,
So much so that each gilded youth there so gay
Then ventured on saying his own little say.

One stalwart Achilles of five feet nothing
Said—"Listen, dear boys, I'll tell you su'thin'.
Last summer, you know, I was down by the sea,
A nice little girl fell in love with me.
Poor little thing! it may really be said
The dear little soul flung herself at my head.
Perhaps 'twas the absence of other society—
Pour passer le temps—or for sake of variety;
But it seemed the right thing when down by the sea,
To stroll around with her, take afternoon tea;
Shout for ice creams; hear the band on the pier;
Tell her she was such a dear little dear;
Call her a gem and a fawn and a star,
Say that I really must ask her papa;
I read her poetry out of a book,
Spouted some more, and used to look
Into her eyes in a tender way:
I knew I could very safely say,
When I looked like that, the hour had come
When she'd murmur, "I'll be your darling one!
And oh, my dearest! now do assure me
You never loved another before me!"
She did. I knew I had safely reckoned;
You see, boys, she was my twenty-second!
I've counted them—Lily, and Minnie, and Mary—
And never have found the performance vary.
I left there next day: I tell you, old man,
I've always found it the safest plan.
I bade her a very tender "Good-bye!"
Said, "Be a good little girl, and don't cry.
Tell me you'll love and remember me,

And these happy days we have had by the sea !”

Then bade her another tender farewell,

And told her be sure never to tell

Re our engagement, but keep it quite dark—

And that was the end of that little lark.

She wrote me a letter—perhaps it was two ;

If you like, by-and-by, I’ll show them to you.”

“Ha ! ha !” laughed his hearers, “’twas splendidly done !

Now that’s what I really call having some fun.”

“Poor little girl !” did somebody say ?

“Oh ! you must not look at it that sort of way ;

’Twas only a little romance she could treasure,

And always look back to with unmixed pleasure.”

“Yes,” said the king, “we have most of us scored,

And most of us got just a trifle bored.”

Then a few more *jeunesse dorée* bragged,

And after that conversation flagged,

Then one said “cards,” and they brought out whisky,

Social converse once more grew frisky,

Taking that high and elegant tone

Men’s always does when together—alone,

Free from restraint of that frivolous sex

Whose mission on earth is to trouble and vex.

Intellectual converse flowed with ease,

And you might have heard such scraps as these :

“Pass the bottle !” “I’ll go it alone !”

“Is he running the mare in your name or his own ?”

“Your turn to deal.” “Pretty neat in her paces,

Heavily backed for the Teheran races ;”

“Nell’s diamonds real ? No, they are paste ;”

“ Forfeit your deal—that card’s misplaced ; ”
“ Sugar ! No, I’m taking mine neat ; ”
“ Who’s that girl going down the street ? ”
“ Four to me ; send the lemons down ; ”
“ Fact—I’ll bet you a pound to a crown
She only takes the smallest of twos :
I know, for she gave me one of her shoes.”
“ We’re safe ; ” “ Our man looks something grand ; ”
“ Oh, I pass !—can’t go on that hand.”
Then, in those ages so long ago,
The king was thought no end of a beau :
The unmarried girls, to capture the prize,
Neglected no arts to look well in his eyes.
Worth’s charges for dresses are quite too alarming,
But what matters that if they make one look charming ?
The older and wiser admired his eyes,
His riding, his horses, his dogs, and his ties,
And whisper’d when near him, “ How handsome his face is,
And, oh ! how he rode at the Isphahan races.”
At all his *bon mots* they laughed loudly ha ! ha !
And said, “ You’re *so* clever—now really you are.”
Our hero was fond of a game they called polo—
Skittles he scorned, he said they were so low.
His playing of polo was greatly admired
By unmarried ladies, who never grew tired
Of watching him tearing about on the course,
Yelling to others and getting quite hoarse,
And raising, in fact, such dust and dishevel,
The rest of the players wished him—well, at Seville ;
But not so the ladies, who, watching, I’m told,
Sat on camp stools for hours, regardless of cold.

They made his mamma most lovely caps,
And knitted her also clouds and wraps,
And when they brought them said, "Oh, I'm so tired—
You know in our house no help is hired ;
Oh, goodness me, how my fingers ache—
I burnt them this morning baking a cake."
And the Dowager Queen would say : " Dear sonny,
This is the kind of girl for my money—
Saving and useful, and never too high
To dust the parlour or make a pie."
Then doting mothers would say to the king,
" Why don't you drop in of a night and sing
With the girls—they've often told me your voice
Is tenor robusta and splendidly choice"—
The king *had* a voice (but the great Aristotle
Relates 'twas like bees humming round in a bottle)—
" And I do hope when you're down in town
You will look on our house just like your own :
The girls always say you *are* so amusing,
And they want you to help them, I know, in choosing
Some music. I don't want my girls to be blues,
But talking with you so broadens their views ;
Not but that if I had my way
I'd keep them children for many a day,
And I do so hope my girls will tarry
For many a year before they marry ;
I know I am selfish, but really, dear Shah,
They are such a comfort to me and their pa."
" I think," thought the king, " she's no ground for her
fears—

The youngest's been twenty for over eight years ;

'Tis plain what their game is, but by the great Moses
 They don't hook this boy for their Kittys or Rosys ;
 Neither Emma nor Daisy, Maggie nor Carry—
 Not one blessed she, shall induce me to marry.
 But the elders met and talked in the forum,
 Saying the king should show more decorum ;
 His manner of life, why it should be a check o'er us,
 Not as it late has been, highly indecorous !
 Whether he will, or whether he won't,
 He'll have to marry, see if he don't !
 The elders frowned upon free selection
 (Their laws are extant in the trades' protection),
 So they chose a band of maidens fair,
 And told the king he had better prepare
 To see which he'd have and which refuse,
 But one young woman he'd *have* to choose !

* * * * *

“ They've come, O king,” said the chamberlain,
 And Ahasuerus said, “ Show them in.”
 They came by eights, and they came by fours,
 They came by dozens, and then by scores.
 The first that came : “ She'll do,” said the king.
 His mother said, “ What, sir ? no such thing—
 Blanc de perle makes *her* so white,
 Under that she's a regular fright.”
 And she also said to the chamberlain :
 “ You need not put your hand 'neath the chin
 Of each young woman as she comes in ;
 Surely to goodness they've got the strength
 To hold their own heads up to walk this length.”

The courtiers giggled, the king he smiled,
But the chamberlain looked "kinder riled ;"
And the queen continued, "I'm also thinking
The list of your duties don't take in winking."
The chamberlain whispered verbs not in the grammar—
The maids of honour declared he said ——
(I'm sorry my memory fails me just here,
But whatever he said, whether proper or queer,
He had to content himself with a leer).
He thought it would be both imprudent and rash
To venture to do any more of a mash,
But certainly thought that he saw his affinity
In each and in every little divinity.
"Hurry on," said the queen, "if you please ; time is
fleeing—
I'm due at four sharp at the Dorcas meeting ;
And after that's over—well, let me see—
I go to the bishop's to five o'clock tea."
The king next thought that he had descried
In number twenty his chosen bride ;
But the queen said, "My ! it's well I'm here,
To see you're not taken in, my dear :
Her walk is atrocious, her feet are huge,
And can't you see she's smothered in rouge.
Twenty-one's not bad, but overgrown,
And I'm certain that hair is never her own."
"Thirty's pretty," said he. Said she, "What ! that hussy,
Ahasuerus ?—good gracious ! mussy !
I'm morally certain as ever I could be
That minx is no better than ever she should be."
"Very few of us are, dearest ma," said the king—

And a smile decked the face of the chamberlain—
And the queen said, “Yes—er—time is fleeting,
I think I *must* go the Dorcas meeting.”
The chamberlain opened wide the door—
Said he, “Dear madam, it’s not yet four :
Perhaps you feel overcome by the heat,
And that is the reason you beat a retreat.
The bishop himself is driving by—
Shall I lean through the window and call out ‘Hi!’”
He was jeering, you know, for history says——
But peace to the scandals of ancient days.
As the queen went out someone came in,
Someone who had such a sweet little chin,
And the loveliest mouth and teeth in the world,
And long black hair so prettily curled,
And, oh ! such a beautiful pair of brown eyes
That always looked in a state of surprise ;
And they looked just then as if they’d say,
Our owner has brought us here to-day.
Just to look round for a bit while we tarry,
But nothing on earth shall induce her to marry.
She’d tiny hands, and she’d tiny feet,
The chamberlain said, “Oh ! ain’t she sweet ?”
And the king remarked, in a voice most grim,
He reckoned he’d smash the chamberlain,
Then looked again at the charming fair
Who owned the eyes and the long black hair.
He forgot he was great, and was rich, and was charming,
His heart thumped so badly ’twas really alarming ;
He forgot he was king, and no end of a catch,
And a prize which any young woman would snatch ;

He forgot he had said he was not to be had,
And that all the dear chappies would say he was mad ;
He forgot that if really he'd live at his ease,
To beware of all sorts and conditions of shes.
So at last he found the courage to say,
"How do ye do? It's a lovely day !
You're the smashingest girl that ever I've seen,
I wish you'd come here and be my queen ;
And the girl who owned the eyes and hair
Said, "I don't know that I really care ;
As for myself, nothing can say I,
Please speak to my uncle, Mordecai.
But what will your friends at the club all say
When they hear what you've gone and done to-day ?"
Said the king, "Let my friends at the club go"—(a haze is
Over these words ; I suppose the inscription
Got blotted by passing of ages, or friction).
Of the rest of this history graven in stone,
The ages have spared us one sentence alone.
It is this : Esther said to the king, "A'suerus,
Do you think, dear, it's well that your ma should live
near us ?"



LOT'S WIFE.



RS. LOT woke up at half-past four,
 And said to Lot, "There you lie and snore !
 Much you care when we get to Zoar !"
 Then, as he did not stir an inch,
 She roused him with a vigorous pinch.

"For mercy's sake, get up," said she,
 "And build the fire for a cup of tea !
 Now, don't pull the clothes up over your head,
 But just get right away out of bed.
 "The hired girl," did I hear you say ?
 You know quite well, sir, she's away
 At her ma's to sleep, as her bed's took down.
 That's right, now, tear your dressing gown,
 Putting it on inside out.
 The axe ?—it's in the shed, no doubt,
 I'm sure I saw it somewhere about.
 Do hurry along. I never—no !
 Never did see a man so slow !
 Oh, yes ! of course, now tear round wild,
 And wake the dear little harmless child !
 Oh ! what dear mother said was true—
 She told me the day I'd bitterly rue

When I went and married a man like you !
The lantern ? Gracious ! how you bother—
It's round about somewhere or other.
It's either on the back kitchen table,
Down in the cellar, or out in the stable.
Stand there, *do*, all day and worry !
Ain't you ever going to hurry ?
I'm sure, if you'd got a grain of sense,
You could feel your way along by the fence.
I suppose"—here her voice grew a trifle higher—
"That *I* must get up and light the fire !"
"I wish I could find my boots," he said,
And groping about he bumped his head,
And grazed his elbow against the bed,
And he said something stronger than merely "Good
lack !"

When he trod on the business end of a tack.
Mrs. Lot did not answer this last remark,
But said that she guessed he'd be stricken stark
If he ventured words like that very often.
She only hoped that grace would soften
His heart before they lived in Zoar,
Or the neighbours never would call on 'em, or
Ask them to croquet, tennis, and tea.
"And you know now, Lot, very well," said she,
"We can't afford to be out in the cold.
The girls are getting the least bit old,
And there's that horrid old cat Mrs. Shem,
Now she's married her girls, always jeering at them."
Unheedful of future family cares
Lot had groped his way to the top of the stairs :

I don't think I'll mention the next words he uttered—
He'd stepped on some bread, and the bread was buttered.

* * * * *

The hour I next speak of was half-past eight.
Mrs. Lot was getting a trifle irate,
And telling her girls she "knew how 'twould be."
"Your father, if you will believe me," said she,
"I thought he *could* go to the carrier man,
But, of course, he's forgotten to order the van."
"I haven't," said Lot—"it's the man who's forgot."
"Don't answer me, sir! I say you did not."
At this very moment the van hove in sight—
"There, now," said Lot, "do you see I was right?"
"What did you say, sir?—you infamous man!
Oh, jeer at me, do, for of course you can.
If ever a woman led martyr's life,
That woman is me, your poor suffering wife."
Then she went upstairs and did her hair
With most elaborate extra care,
And in less than ten minutes herself arrayed
In a natty costume—'twas tailor-made—
And a jaunty hat of the sailor sort,
And the best of "six buttons" that could be bought;
But here, I regret, I'm unable to tell
How the family started, and what next befell
Must remain to posterity ever a mystery—
Two pages are torn from this part of the history.

* * * * *

'Twas 6 p.m. when they reached the plain.
Mrs. Lot said, "*Never*, no, *never* again

Do you catch *me* coming such an excursion :
Not even the least little bit of diversion
To vary the journey, and, oh ! I'm so weary,
And cramped, too, with sitting—it's really so dreary
To travel all day and never to meet
With a decent person ! I'm dying with heat ;
It's something too awful ; I'm morally sure
I shall be a nice object when we get to Zoar,
For my face will be covered with freckles all o'er.”
But just at that moment a sound in the distance
Revealed to her ears the most welcome existence
Of someone on horseback galloping fast.
“Aha !” said the lady, “here's someone at last.
Let me see ——” “No !” said Lot, in a voice loud
and hearty,
“Don't look back, for your life—never mind who's the
party
That's coming behind us. Most likely it will be
Those fellows we met when we stopped to have tea
At the World's End Hotel ; and you know it's not
proper
To be staring behind you at every clodhopper.”
“Clodhoppers, indeed !” cried his wife, “I'm quite sure
That whatever *they* are, you yourself are a boor ;
And, I'm certain, if *you* had got eyes in your head,
You'd have seen they were gentlemen born and bred,
And only a man that was born without sense
Would have failed to observe that, on any pretence,
The tall one was anxious to make himself pleasing
To dearest Rebecca. Your manner's so freezing
And ‘stand off,’ and hateful to every young man,

The girls have no chance, though I try all I can.”
To soothe her; said Lot—“ I but meant to remind you
That, whatever you do, you *must not* look behind you.”
But in vain did he speak. The sweet opposition,
Which is one of the traits of a wife’s disposition,
Here caused Mrs. Lot to disdain the injunction
And straightway declare, without any compunction,
“ Well, just to *remind you* I’m not *quite* a slave,
And won’t be dictated to how to behave,
I *will* look”—and she turned; but before Lot cried
“ Halt !”

Oh, horror ! she stood there a pillar of salt !
And the merchants coming over the plain,
They scooped her up—yes, every grain—
Yes, cleaned her up right down to the ground,
And sold her out at tuppence a pound.
Let this be a warning to ladies, then :
Don’t take a fancy to strange young men.



TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

(ON THE FIRST OF JANUARY.)



COULD I transfer to this page the portrait of this preface month of the year my book would have more exquisite illuminations than the rarest missal. How can I with words, and but sorry command of those, bring to those who know you not this January day of '91? The high, wide reaches of blue upper air, over which snowy clouds are lazily sailing; the scent and touch of the west wind coming across a plain which glows as a Persian tile, from a sea so brilliant one seems almost unable to realize its full strength of colour. How can I make palpable the Æolian tones of the breeze-swept vines, which show the grey surface of under-leaf alternating with the emerald of the upper? How give even a faint idea of your long range of rounded hills, which are golden under slanted sun-rays, their cup-moulded depressions fit chalices for the purple and amber of shade and light? How can I picture the loveliness of this dear old garden, the home of bird and bee; the graceful wreaths of the purple passion flowers, the late blossoms of the golden-hearted roses, the cream and carmine of the honeysuckle, the vermilion of the

geraniums, which seem like clarions proclaiming the advent of the year?

A plumbago at the window is waving to and fro ; it reminds me of a pretty girl friend in a blue dress. Daisies, like wide open-eyed children in frilled white bonnets, are standing in the shade of the lemon tree. But as I look from our cottage porch I feel the portrait of to-day has evaded me. It is lovely, and as difficult to paint as the opalescent hues of the wings of the dragon fly. I see and adore, but cannot paint its beauty. Someone has said we look on nature and invent. Not wilfully, dear reader, have I invented ; but rather, as a moulder of images, in place of warm life have given you cold clay. Often and often have I repeated myself ; but for this I ask no pardon. When we love we do not invent new words ; we only say over and over, " You are beautiful ! I love you ! I love you ! "



WHAT THE WICKED MANDARIN SAID.



AM eleven years old, and I can write beautifully—Sylvia says so ; but I will not show what I am going to write to anyone, although it would serve that wicked mandarin right if all the world knew what a bad old storyteller he is. He is so ugly. I do hope he will never see this ; I must lock it away in the inlaid desk Sylvia gave me on my last birthday.

It was one very bright moonlight night when he told me what I am going to write about. He had told me ever so many stories before—of ghosts, and murders, and awful dragons like those on the little teapot beside him, and what dreadful things happened to little girls who lay awake at night and looked at the stars instead of going to sleep. But this was all about Sylvia. It was such a terrible story, and not one word of it true, I feel quite sure. I wish the mandarin lived anywhere else than in that little cabinet opposite my bed ; but that is the only corner the cabinet fits. Sylvia is very fond of it, and the mandarin and teapot : they belonged to mamma. The moonlight was so bright that night, and the sea looked like silver, and the revolving light on the opposite coast looked like the ghost of a wandering star. The moon knew how sorry I was to

be in bed while she shone so brightly, and sent long bands of lovely silver light through the window. The passion vine on the verandah seemed cut in black velvet against the bright full moon ; an empty wren's nest hung amongst the leaves ; the wrens had built when the Bourcault roses were thrusting their pink faces in among the passion flowers—blushing country maidens peering at princesses in purple. The day we found two tiny blue eggs in the nest a gentleman came to see Sylvia, and we had tea on the verandah. I think Sylvia must have known he was coming, for she had baked such nice cakes in the morning—cakes as good as she makes for my birthday parties. The best tea service had been got out. Our old servant Dorothy was very cross, and said she could not bake any scones ; she was certain they'd be heavy. Sylvia said, "Never mind, we'll do without them if you are tired, Dorothy ;" but just as we were sitting down to tea Dorothy brought in a plateful—hot as toast, and light as a feather. The yellow flowers of the jasmine fell about the verandah in little scented showers ; some fluttered down on Sylvia's hair, and showed like gold stars. She has such pretty hair ; it ripples all over her head, and on her neck are little curls. It is such fun to kiss her neck and feel the curls tickle one's face. Her eyes are brown—they look black till she opens them wide ; it is the shadow of the long lashes which darkens them. Sylvia showed the gentleman the wren's nest ; he whispered to her ; she flushed pink as a Bourcault ; but Sylvia is no country maiden—she has the manners of a princess. The gentleman whispered very often ; I

thought it very rude. Sylvia did not seem to think so—the one who is whispered to never does ; it is the people who do not hear. He said something about a happy omen. I thought at first an omen must be what people say at the end of their prayers, and that he had called it wrong ; but I looked it out in the dictionary, and it means a sign—a sign of what, I wonder ? He was a very tall gentleman, very sunburnt, and had very white teeth ; when he laughed he showed them very much, and I always would think of the wolf in “ Little Red Cap.” Trails of passion vine hung from the rafters of the verandah—pale-green sprays decked with lilac stars. A breeze came and swung them. As they swayed they frightened the mother wren ; she twittered loudly, her husband hopped about and scolded. The gentleman said the bird was like a sapphire set in jet. I noticed his eyes were the colour of its head, and I thought of a saying of Dorothy’s—“ So very blue, not very true.” I wonder if the gentleman told fibs when he was a little boy ? Of course he does not tell them now, for he is so big and strong, and Sylvia says it is only weak, cowardly people who deceive. Dorothy says grown-up people always tell the truth. Sylvia looped up the swaying passion-flowers, so that they could not frighten the birds. Presently the wren’s husband came to peck up cake crumbs. It was such a lovely day. From where I sat I could see great vineyards spread over the hills, and long rows of red earth between the gold green of the vines ; and further off blue forests, where there are pixies, nymphs, and gnomes. The plains were veiling themselves in mauve

mist, and Adelaide seemed the city of a fairy tale. Tall spires and towers showed purple through the mist, with here and there a flash of gold, and the large buildings of white stone seemed melting in the golden haze. Across the further plains the backwaters were like silver threads, and beyond a bar of cream-white sandhills the sea flashed. The gentleman and Sylvia walked in the garden. I gave Arabella and Rosalie their tea; they are my only children—or, rather, were. But—oh! I can hardly write of it. I will tell how beautiful the day was till my hand does not shake, and this big lump has gone out of my throat. The roses were all blossom—cream, crimson, and gold. The air was very sweet with scent of orange bloom and hay; a great bush of Persian lilac was in flower. Sylvia looked so lovely in her white gown, standing against the blossoms, round which primrose-coloured butterflies were hovering; I am sure the gentleman thought so, for he did not look at lilac or butterflies—only at Sylvia. The sun was sinking. On the white walls of the cottage were blue shadows; they were so pretty to look at. I could see every leaf of the passion vine outlined on the wall in blue shadow, and the wren's nest, with her little head peeping over, and a spider's web with a fat spider sitting in it. When the breeze blew the nest seemed to swing to the shadow web, and a blue shadow shower of jasmine flowers fell. On an open space of wall came the shadows of the gentleman and Sylvia. The breeze blew with quite a gust, and made them move, for the tall shadow seemed to put its arms round Sylvia,

and turn her face to his and hold it there. It looked so strange. I started, and knocked over a chair. It could only have been the breeze, for when I looked round the gentleman and Sylvia were standing quite far apart, Sylvia very flushed, driving away a dragon-fly with a branch of honeysuckle she had gathered. But when I turned again, what a dreadful sight! I saw—oh! dear! dear!—Arabella, my sweet darling, was dead. Her lovely face was smashed to atoms. The chair I had upset was the one she was sitting on. I cried out. Sylvia ran to me, and took me in her arms, and was very kind. I could do nothing but cry. The gentleman looked very cross; by-and-by he went away. In the evening, when the moon came over the hill, we buried dear Arabella by the grave of the canary, under the tall white lilies.

But all this happened in the early summer, and what I want to write down is what the wicked mandarin said that very bright moonlight night in March. He sat on the cabinet, leering horribly. I hid my face, but had to look; he always makes me. So I got up and set his head nodding. He likes that; and then he does not make such ugly faces. When I was again in bed he began to talk, "It's no good pretending to be asleep," he said. "I know quite well you are watching those disreputable 'possums scrambling down the verandah posts, to go out gallivanting all night and come rolling home just before daybreak, as I'm getting my second sleep. That wren's nest is empty now, the shade of my illustrious uncle be thanked! What the cat was about, to let all that screeching

go on right over her head, I can't think. Cats are not what they used to be." "Are there any cats in China, Mr. Mandarin?" I asked. "Yes; we make pies of them, and of naughty girls, too!" He goggled his eyes and snapped his mouth, then said—"Have you noticed how thin and pale Sylvia is?" "Sylvia?" I cried. "Yes, Sylvia," he mocked. "She's losing all her good looks." "She's not," I said, sharply; "she's always lovely. She has had the headache very much lately; that is what makes her look so pale." "Oh, yes!" he jeered. "The headache—of course it's the headache!" He chuckled for a long time, then went on: "Do you remember the man who came here the day you murdered Arabella?" I could not answer—it was such a dreadful thing to say. "That was Sylvia's lover. Of course, you noticed nothing—greedy, selfish little pig, stuffing yourself with cakes and sugar. But I looked out to the lilac bush and know he was Sylvia's lover. You remember, before then, Sylvia had been away for a month staying with a school friend. You were with other friends at the seaside. You cried every night, you baby. Ugh! I wish I'd been there to frighten you! Sylvia did not cry; she was too happy, going long rides and drives with that man who came here. At night, when you were crying and puling, Sylvia was strolling with him under the dark-leaved whispering gums, where the scent of flowering wattles came, and seemed not half so sweet as the words she listened to. She did not think of you. What do you say?—that 'she wrote very often, and such sweet, kind letters!' Oh, to be sure! and that man lounged about the room while she wrote,


and said he wished he were you. You ! a little, ugly, freckled thing ! Sylvia laughed ; she laughed very often then. She does not laugh now ; of course, it is those ‘headaches !’ One evening they wandered in the garden of the homestead and stayed their steps by a fern-fringed pool called ‘The Wishing Well.’ A blossoming cherry tree overhung the water. The lover dropped a stone ; it sank with a bell-like chime. ‘ ’Tis a wedding peal !’ he said. ’Twas the knell of Sylvia’s happy hours. The crescent moon peered through the bloomy boughs and smiled. She has seen a good deal of that sort of thing in her time, though she forgets to mention it. The nest is deserted now ; so is Sylvia. Did you see that great boat that came into the bay yesterday ? You did ? The man who kissed Sylvia by the lilacs, the man who told Sylvia he loved her and would always love her, was in that boat. He had written a letter to Sylvia, after a long, long silence. He said that his father was dead, and now he was going to have a great deal of money, and would go over the sea and become somebody very grand indeed. He said it was only possible for him to marry someone who was also very grand. Sylvia ! what would she have been amongst great ladies ? A pink Bourcault among imperial passion flowers. ‘No ! no ! no !’ you say. What do you know of the ways of the great ? Have you ever seen ‘The Emperor’s Mother-in-Law ; or, The Man Behind the Door ?’ Are you a mandarin of the gold button ?” I did not answer. I suppose he really was a very great personage in his own country, and that is what makes him so disagreeable here. “Do you know where Sylvia was last night ?” he

said. "She went through the avenue of poplars, where the leaves are all golden brown, past the great bignonias shedding their coral clarions, past vineyards from which the night cuckoo was calling, and on through the almond orchard to the hill above, where the dry grass shone silver-white under the moon. From the distant gullies came the mournful wail of curlews. Sylvia sat in the shadow of a tree, and looked out over the land flecked with light and shade—she always kept her gaze on the west; at dawn a wind drew the mists from the sea, where the boat showed like a long black line. Then Sylvia fell upon her face and cried—"Oh, God! I cannot, cannot bear it." When the sun peered over the hill Sylvia rose and came under the falling almond leaves through the shadow. All the light seemed out on the silver sea with the boat. "Do you know where Sylvia is to-night? She stands by her window, and looks out to the moonlit bay, where there is now no boat. The boat is gone. The lover is gone—gone to be the lover of someone else. Sylvia looks at the bay as one looks at anything one is fond of, and not likely to see again. In her hand she has——" But I would not stop to listen to any more of his wicked story. I felt as if my heart would break. The mandarin gibbered, but I leaped from my bed and ran down the hall to Sylvia's room. I suppose that evil thing must have seen through a chink in the wall, for Sylvia *was* standing by her window, and she was looking at the bay. She started, and gave a sharp cry when she saw me—"Darling!" she cried, and held out her arms. As she did so something blue dropped from her hands and fell to the floor,

leaving a dark stain where it fell. The air seemed heavy with the odour of poppies. "Dearest, you are cold and trembling," Sylvia said, "what is the matter?" She placed me in her bed, and lay beside me. I put my arms tight round her, and buried my face in her bosom. I felt very, very frightened, but I did not tell her what the wicked Mandarin said, "because Sylvia is *fond* of him," and when one loves anything it *hurts so* to find it is not worthy of being loved.



MY NEIGHBOUR ACROSS THE WAY.

ECEMBER 10TH, 1881.—My neighbour across the way has just gone into her house. The walk she has taken has brought no colour to her face: her large brown eyes look as weary as ever—the slight figure seemed too frail to bear the weight of her furred velvet cloak. A quaint picture is the house across the way, with its peaked, mossed roof and the narrow windows, against whose panes the lilacs and laburnums sway in summer. But it is winter now, and from the wide-tiled fireplace of the paneled reception-room a leaping fire throws out light which disturbs the calm surface of the mirrors as though a flight of golden swallows skimmed across. The light glancing hither and thither shows gorgeous colours on the tall jars and great bowls which hold dried rose leaves. It hurls fiery darts into the gaping mouths of Chinese monsters. It flashes suddenly on a little spindle-legged cabinet in a dark corner and shows how shamelessly the Chelsea shepherdess is ogling the Dresden gallants. It steals to the spinet and brightens the jewels on the fingers of my neighbour as her hands move over the yellowed keys and draw out a faint, sobbing melody. The big dog stirs from his luxurious sleep on the tigerskin rug and, getting up, lays his head

in the lap of the musician. The piping bullfinch is restless on his perch, and his mistress covers his cage to keep out the light. He is a musician himself, and cares for no music save his own. "*Partant pour la Syrie*" he sings every day, and often. It is the only song he knows. His mistress does not return to the spinet; she lies on a couch far in the shadow. But the restless light, glancing on her, shows that her eyes are very bright—bright as the diamonds on her fingers. The little Frenchwoman, her servant, who looks like a fairy godmother, comes to light the candles in the Sevres girandoles: drawing the curtains, she shuts from view my neighbour across the way.

DECEMBER 20TH.—To-day my neighbour did not come to the window to feed the birds, and the two children who visit her every week went away at once. I remember, in the spring, soon after I came here, these children brought a younger child with them, and they went into the reception-room. My neighbour put her arms about the child, but he was timid and cried. The elder children led him out. As they trotted down the street they chattered, "It was because Ma'm'selle looked so sad baby had been afraid." "Yes, that was it; Ma'm'selle was very kind, but then she did not laugh like mamma." In the garden of my neighbour the lilac was regal with perfumed purple bloom. From the apple tree, which thrust pink favours towards the narrow windows, a breeze shook a blossom shower and brought the sound of voices. "The children of others," said the little Frenchwoman: then hastily amended—"The children of these English are so stupid, unin-

teresting little sheep." "No, Susette," answered the sweet voice of my neighbour, "it is the shadow which frightened the child: the shadow which is on the house—on me—even upon the apple tree, for, though it blossoms, it bears no fruit." Why has she not come to-day to feed the birds? Why have the children stayed so short a time? Is she away? Where? She has so few friends—only an old priest, the children, and their mother, a little fair-haired bundle of a woman with blue eyes. From this window, at which I sketch for my bread, I have many opportunities of noting the house across the way.

DECEMBER 21ST.—No light was in the panelled room last night. To-day my servant has told me the young French lady across the way is ill. Very ill? No, not very ill, but of late Ma'm'selle has not been very strong; she feels the winter. He "wondered Ma'm'selle stayed in that dull house. Her father died in the winter of last year, and it was thought Ma'm'selle would go back to France." It is but natural my servant should wonder why my neighbour stays in that sombre house. He cannot guess the memories it holds. He does not know the story I heard but yesterday from a chance acquaintance.

In the high-walled garden behind the house across the way, one year there grew most beautiful roses. The garden was always famous for roses, but that year they were finer than they had ever been before. Among them was a seedling reared by Ma'm'selle herself; she named it the "Prince Imperial." For was not the Prince the close friend of her lover? One afternoon, in

the prime of that time of roses, Ma'm'selle had put on a gala gown of soft yellow silk—a gown tied with a yellow sash, and in the folds of old lace at her throat were crimson roses. A carriage had come to the door, and the Prince and the lover had gone with Ma'm'selle and her father to the rose garden to see the new “Prince Imperial.” Behold, this floral Prince was so strong he had thrown blossoming sprays over and almost smothered “La Republique” growing beside him, and was extending fragrant, amorous arms to a fair “Princess,” who did not disdain his embrace. They had all laughed, and the father of Ma'm'selle had bowed low to the Prince, and in the peace of that sunny English garden declaimed a little speech which would have been counted revolutionary in France. Coffee, liqueur, and hot cakes were served in the arbour. Flecks of light fell through the overhanging clematis and powdered with gold the dark hair of Ma'm'selle. The lover had teasingly questioned her, “Had she put on her grandmother’s gown?” She had pretended to pout a little; then the Prince made a pretty speech to the effect that “Madame Recamier had stepped from her portrait frame.” The red lips again parted over the white teeth in the laugh that was never long absent in those days. In the reception room Ma'm'selle’s father showed the Prince some swords of rare workmanship. “It was with this,” said he, his pale face flushing while he handled one of the weapons, “my father fought beside your granduncle at Rivoli.” The summer twilight began to fall. The Prince, having taken leave of Ma'm'selle, was escorted to the carriage by the father

and the lover. "*Partant pour la Syrie*," shrilled the piping bullfinch, alert at the sound of the departing carriage. "A fine lad, a fine lad," said the old man, half to himself, as he stopped to rest in the garden. The lover went swiftly to the panelled room. In its sombre precincts shadows were fast gathering. They hid the little lovers on the willow pattern plaques; they veiled the shameless conduct of the Chelsea shepherdess, and pressed close about the living lovers who whispered and caressed in the rose-scented dusk. Ah, that was a time of roses and rejoicing. Now there is little save snow and sorrow. One day, some months after that happy rose time, the old priest came to tell Ma'm'selle that the brave heart that had pulsed so high with love and hope of her was cold and still in the land of the savage. A message had come from the Prince, the priest had said; but Ma'm'selle neither heard nor saw. She stood as though stricken into stone. "Heaven will console her," the priest said sadly to Susette as he left the house. But in those dark days Ma'm'selle thought not of heaven, only of the brave, handsome lover slain by the assegai of the savage. "*Partant pour la Syrie*," sang the bullfinch. "*Maladroit* beast," cried Susette, and, covering him with her apron, carried him to another room.

DECEMBER 23RD.—To-day Susette threw food to the birds. She looked as though she had been crying. The priest and the doctor have called; each waited to speak to Susette at the hall door. The poor woman was evidently in great trouble. How impressionable these Frenchwomen are! A slight illness to her mistress and she is in all this distress. The illness can only be

slight ; for when, this morning, I ventured to send my servant with some hot-house fruit and inquiries, he brought answer, "Ma'm'selle returned many thanks, and felt almost well." There ! that is the second sketch I have spoiled, and they are now overdue. Her face comes between me and my work. I have given a ballet girl the eyes of a sorrowing angel.

DECEMBER 24TH.—Adieu ! house across the way, for a few days. To-night I go down to Lancashire, to the home of an old school chum. "You must stay with us to see the old year out," he writes. Yes, I suppose I must. Suppose I must, indeed ! What a thankless brute I am ! How much of my present prosperity do I owe to my old schoolfellow's kindness ! Besides, Ma'm'selle is better. Much better, my servant brought word this morning. On New Year's Day I will be at home again. She will be able to receive a visitor by then. Conventionality shall be put aside. Call upon her and wish her a happy New Year I *will*, even if I have to pretend that I come from New York and am but following the usual custom.

JANUARY 1ST, 1882.—It was late afternoon when I came back to-day. Susette had been early in closing the blinds. In Ma'm'selle's room a light showed faintly through the drawn curtains. Determined to begin the New Year with new friendships, I called at my neighbour's house before entering my own. The heavy "griffin" knocker worked stiffly. A sullen echo sounded in the house. "I called to bring some flowers," I began to explain to Susette. "Enter M'sieur," she interrupted, and showed me upstairs. Passing from the

stronger light in the hall, the room I entered seemed for a moment filled with mist, which blurred the pictures of saints and the ivory crucifix on the wall. Tapers in silver candlesticks shone at the upper end of the long room, and when I saw where they were set I knew that the joy or the sorrow of the years was naught to my neighbour. It is I who will number their dreary winter days—I who will feel the burden of their summer. With her the years are not. The dark lashes have closed over the tired eyes for ever! A gown of white silk shrouds her. The little hands rest among snow-drops. It is thus she lies to-night in the house across the way. The room yet bore traces of her living presence: jewels and perfumes were on the toilet table; a book of hours lay on a *prie-dieu* chair. “The doctor said a chill had settled on the lungs,” sobbed Susette. Ah! it was a broken heart! What chance for a heart to heal in this sad house, where all things recalled the lover? “Good night, M’sieur.” The door with the “griffin” knocker was closed.

JANUARY 2ND, 1882.—To-night the snow is falling. It falls upon my neighbour’s grave. It falls on me as I break a little bare branch from the apple tree which looked in at her window—the apple tree which blossomed, but to which no time of harvest came.



T.B.



AM an elderly spinster, with small means and much neuralgia. When the latter becomes unbearable I go for a change to the seaside. It was on the occasion of one of these little excursions to Henley Beach the strange experience hereafter related befel me. With a small basket containing sandwiches and a little "something" to soothe the pain of the neuralgia, I took the tramcar from Hindley-street—these modern conveyances have their drawbacks, as well as the old omnibus, being generally more than half filled by children, whose ages are always *under* the full fare standard; likewise, it is the Australian custom to reckon that six children only take up the room of one person. Thus crowded I suffered many digs in the ribs from the wooden spades of happy prattlers, loudly proclaiming "what a 'igh 'ouse" they were going to build. Some people smile when this happens to them, but I notice it is always people whose ribs are well covered. I, like the "Ancient Mariner," am lank and lean. I do not smile. Some people smile when older children, who are instructed to hold the family provision basket "careful, now," interpret that somewhat obscure sentence to a command to empty the contents (usually of a saccharine, oleaginous, and liquid nature) over the occupants of the car. In these instances

the people who smile are those whose apparel has evidently known such treatment before. On the day in question I had gone through all these trials, and in addition had a baby deposited in my lap while its heated and excited mother searched with the whole length of her arm in a mysterious pocket for her tickets. She rose to her feet to facilitate her research, and from its depths she brought to light a door key; she looked at it as one not seeming quite certain what it was, then addressed her "eldest born"—"M'ria, if 'ere ain't our door key, an' there'll be yer par 'ome early an' going round like anythin'." The "eldest born" (it was thus the mother introduced her), a child of few words, weak eyes, and lank hair, did not seem affected by the prospect of the rotatory exercise the author of her being was condemned to. She seemed to be constantly chewing something—doubtless, "the cud of reflection." She chewed steadily on while her mother continued to grope in the depths of her capacious pocket and brought out a cape, a feeding bottle, a bitten apple, a piece of string, three handkerchiefs, a paper of peppermints—which latter she distributed impartially among her offspring. Finally remembering the "eldest born," she darted into some innermost recess of that calm personality's garments and produced the fare. The baby, as before mentioned, was large; it had embarrassing proclivities, such as putting its hands in my eyes and mouth; it then feigned to believe my cloak buttons edible, but finding them Dead Sea fruit, stiffened itself in an alarming manner, and as suddenly collapsed, and with a final kick of its woolly boots in my side, composed itself to

slumber. The mother said it would be a pity to disturb it, and appearing to think we were now on terms of intimacy, proceeded to inform me that "it" was the very moral of "im." 'Im, I concluded, was the paternal parent of "it." She next detailed the various ailments her family had endured, being assisted by the "eldest born." "Awful bad they 'ad the measles," she said. "You should 'a seen our Bill, 'e were that spotty you never ——"

We reached the beach, and I was truly thankful that this interesting family preferred the sands to the pier.

* * * *

I was sitting on the jetty steps, facing landward. The trim line of villas fronting the sea stared in all the glory of new brick, and the strong sunlight made me blink to look at them. In turning away my head the edge of the jetty and the legends inscribed thereon took away my attention. "BILL," evidently carved with a knife that had seen better days. "W.W.," with many flourishes. Possibly W.W. strove to make a flourish in his own small world. Some intuition tells me he was member of a suburban literary society, at reunions of which he recited with much dramatic force "The Little Hero," and other poems of great moral worth. "J.S."—ah! our old John Smith. Well, well, I've known many Smiths in my time—simple, kindly folk, "very much as God made them, and oftentimes a great deal worse." "JACK"—umph, certainly "next day" when Jack cut that; then in a space quite by themselves the letters "T.B." Who was T.B.? Theophilus Baldwin! No—

no man weighted by the name of Theophilus could have put in the dash and jauntiness those letters had. The air was very warm ; with closed eyes I avoided the glare. A slight sound made me look round : close beside me was an enormous crab. My first impulse was one *rare* among women—it was to scream ; my second impulse to prod him back to his native element with my umbrella. Both I restrained, or, rather, the crab did. “ He held me with his glittering eye,” and then unfastened my basket of sandwiches and took out a small bottle, “ That’s for the neuralgia,” I said. He closed one eye. “ I believe you,” he answered, “ I’ve had it myself.” Judging by the height to which the bottle was tilted he evidently had it very badly. The glitter of his eye relaxed a little ; he became communicative. Then, looking at the inscription, he said, in a mellow, retrospective tone—“ T.B.—ah ! perhaps you would like to know who T.B. was. Well, I’ll just wet my throat a bit and tell you all about him.” I thought, considering the wetting he had given that part of his anatomy a minute before, it had been better dried a little, but was afraid if restrained in his inclinations he might become taciturn. “ ’Twas February : on vine-clad hills fierce sunrays kissed the vines,” the crab began grandiloquently, and winked an eye to see if I admired his eloquence. “ Leaves on the apricot trees yellowed and fell. Seven apricot trees grew in her father’s garden. Her father swept up the leaves every day and buried them in the rubbish heap.” “ Who was her ?” I asked eagerly. “ Did you ever hear of Morell’s grammar ?” said the crab sternly. I hung my head. “ He was a very tidy man, was her father, and a very good

man; he always put his name down for five pounds to various charities of a prominent nature, and the names of each of his family, with five shillings donation opposite, down to the baby, who was described in parenthesis as now being in heaven. Some people called her father 'Old Hunks' and 'Skinflint.' Certainly he had put a good bit of money by. He had also put by a wife—a wife who had looked like a yard and a half of grey flannel run and shrunk in the washing—a wife whose normal expression was that of a horse much pulled at the mouth and thrashed when going up hill. But you should have seen her funeral. 'Nothink mean about me,' her sorrowing husband said to the undertaker. 'Do everythink in the best o' style.' The only child, at the time I'm speaking of, ma'am, beneath the shelter of the paternal roof was the youngest daughter, the adored of T.B. The first time he met her was at a Norwood quadrille party. How she came to be there was really very remarkable, for when leaving home she had said to her father that she was afraid she should be rather late for the tea meeting, and that she did so hope Mr. Boozeley's cold was better, so that he might be able to address the meeting. The tea was to be held that evening at the schoolhouse belonging to a chapel her married sister attended in Norwood. Yet that very evening there was she, the sweetest of creatures, dressed in blue, gaily dancing at the quadrille party, her large eyes shining, her cheeks flushed till they rivalled the roses in the Botanical Gardens. My, she was a beauty!" Here the horrid old crab gave such a leer that I could not help frowning, and said, "Never mind, sir; you need not describe

her charms too minutely." So he went on : " She looked like a schoolgirl having a glorious time, but afraid of being caught. She was not caught, but T.B. was. If ever a man was struck all of a heap, that man was. He danced with her a dozen times, and she seemed to like it. The married sister said in an awful whisper, ' Oh, do dance with someone else ; everyone is talking about you.' Two old ladies, who had each brought five plain daughters of whom partners seemed shy, agreed in chorus with these ten virgins ' that it was disgraceful the way T.B. and that shameful hussy were going on. What he could see in her they did not know—dolly-faced, painted, forward thing !'

" After that glorious evening T.B. called at her home one Saturday afternoon, and was introduced to her father. When he had gone her father sat far back on his chair, and doubted if T.B. belonged to the Lord ! ' Ah ! he ain't like Boozeley ; Boozeley's the man for my money, and the man for you.' ' Oh, papa !' his daughter said. ' Oh, papa !' he mimicked, with elephantine playfulness ; then continued : ' Well, I must say as the courtin' ain't so fast as I'd make it with a goodlookin' gal like you. But then Boozeley is a man as 'as the Lord in 'is 'art. Everythink takes time ; yes, everythink.' After this profound statement he went out to lay poison for a neighbour's dog which had been digging amongst his choicest flowers with an evident desire to find a short cut to the antipodes. On the following Saturday T.B. called again. The old man left off gardening, and came to sit in the parlour. He did not say much, but he snorted vigorously. Snorting has a

very paralyzing effect on conversation. T.B. said he hoped her father was well ; that it was lovely weather. He then remarked what a beautiful lawn they had ; he had never seen such a well-kept garden. Did they water it often ? Did they use a sprinkler or a hose ? But the old man snorted right through all this one-sided conversation. So T.B. suddenly remembered he had an appointment, and was afraid he must say good-bye. When he shook hands with her the tears stood in her large eyes ; her pretty face was very red. The old man went down to the gate, and when T.B. had passed through he snapped it to, and thus delivered his feelings : ‘ Now, lookee ’ere, young man, I don’t want no dandy bank clerk jackanapes like you foolin’ round after my gal and my money—so good day to you, and don’t let me catch you ’ere agen, nor after my gal in no place.’ T.B. looked as if he was going to speak, but he only lifted his hat from his trim brown head and went away, feeling he could fight a steam engine. The old man returned to the house, and repeated the gist of his remarks to his daughter. A few days after this T.B.’s love did not feel very well. She thought it was indigestion ailed her, and perhaps a little change might take it away. Her father thought so too, and sent her to stay with the married sister. The sister’s husband never to this day can recollect how he first became acquainted with T.B., nor how it came to pass that he (usually a most reserved man) on the third day of acquaintance asked T.B. home to dinner. He does not remember that he *did* ask him, but supposes he must have done so, for he certainly came, and did not seem to

want to go away again. Even now he ponders over this. Once he consulted his wife on the subject. She said, "Don't be a fool." Since then he has considered the matter alone. After that first visit the sister's husband began to think it would be only courtesy on the part of T.B. to say that he (T.B.) was glad to see him (the married sister's husband) at the house, and hoped he would make himself at home, for in those days it really seemed as if T.B. owned the house.

"The sister sighed a great deal, and seemed to have a load on her mind. Her husband thought she had indigestion, but when he suggested it she answered so sharply in the negative that he really wished she *would* get it, as her sister, who was such a martyr to it, was so cheerful and pleasant. In a fortnight T.B.'s love had to go home. She was very sad the day she left ; but her sister became more cheerful, and surprised her husband that evening by remarking, *apropos* of nothing — 'Well, whatever happens, it cannot be laid at my door.' When T.B.'s love got home she looked so beautiful even her father noticed it. 'My, if some one were 'ere he'd fire up with the courtship, I'll bet arf-a-crown,' he observed genially. His daughter said, 'Oh ! papa.'

"Next day she had a terrible headache. The old man grumbled, and said he could *not* think what 'gals' was made of now-a-days, with their fids and fads. By-and-by she cried a little, the pain was so bad ; and when dinner was over (it was an early meal there)—'none of yer 'igh-flown ways' for T.B.'s love's father—his daughter said, if dear papa did not mind, she would

take the Henley Beach car and sit quietly on the pier—the air might do her head good. ‘The very thing,’ said dear papa; ‘grand day for fishin’; I’ll come with you.’ Off he went for rod and tackle, leaving the poor thing so overcome with emotion she could scarcely totter to the kitchen to sob forth her woes on the shoulder of Florrie, the sympathetic general servant. But, there, ‘we never know what an hour may bring forth.’ Just as they were about to start, Florrie was seized with hysterics of so violent a nature that she could not even raise her head from the pillow of her bed, on which she had fallen in a very comfortable position. So T.B.’s love set out alone for Henley Beach, for the old man said ‘’twas no use for two mewlin’ gals bein’ in the ’ouse,’ for if he went out the place would be overrun with tramps. You never saw a girl suffer as Florrie did. When the old man came to inquire, through the medium of the key-hole, if Florrie couldn’t rouse herself and light up the kitchen fire, she could only groan. Presently the front door bell rang, and she heard the voice of the Rev. Mr. Boozeley as the old man led him into the diningroom. Then Florrie got up, and I suppose the violence of the late attack caused her to lean a good way out of the window, with all her hair hanging loose. She had long golden hair, and very charming it looked in the sunlight. The handsome young man next door, who was engaged to attend to the garden and ponies thought he had never seen such pretty hair. Of course Florrie had not the faintest idea he could see her, and was *quite startled* when the young man, who was grooming the ponies in the next

yard, said 'Lovely evening, ain't it, Miss?' Florrie looked up and down and round about to see where the voice came from, and when at last she became conscious of the presence of the young man, she said, 'Oh, you! who'd ever a' thought of you being there.' Then she grabbed at her hair to twist it up, but being so confused at the young man's unexpected presence, it was only natural that that long gold hair should tumble down again in a silky rippling shower. The young man thought the weather warm. Florrie 'thought it was.' The young man thought Miss Florrie looked pale. Florrie thought she *felt pale*. The young man thought the air might do Miss Florrie good. Florrie thought 'perhaps it might.' So she went out and leaned on the back fence. The young man groomed the pony. Florrie said 'T.B. was the very nicest looking young man she'd ever laid eyes on.' The young man next door said 'Oh!' and groomed the pony so vigorously that it became restive. Florrie said perhaps she had better go in, as the young man had so much to do, and she hoped she hadn't hindered him as it was. The young man threw the curry-comb a dozen yards away, and came and leaned on the fence, and said T.B.'s love was pretty, dooced pretty, but he knew someone a long sight prettier. Florrie said, 'Get away.' He did, from his own premises, and came over the fence—he said it was so sunny on his side of the fence. So Florrie and he sat on an enormous cow melon that T.B.'s love's father intended to exhibit at the March show. It is difficult for two fair-sized people to sit on a cow melon, even when it is very large. So the young man

and Florrie held each other on. All this time Mr. Boozeley and the old man had been talking in the diningroom. The hall clock struck the half-hour of five, the street door slammed, signifying Boozeley had departed. 'Law! as late as that,' Florrie said, and ran into the house. In half an hour she had lighted the fire, washed the dishes, and laid tea, while in the same time the young man had groomed the pony and milked the cow. People talk of the wonderful effects produced by the 'grape cure' and of the strengthening properties of apples, but for thoroughly invigorating the constitution there is nothing surpasses sitting on a cow melon. But what of T.B.'s love? It was rather late when she left home, and the way she ran was most imprudent in a girl who had such a dreadful headache. However, she caught the car just as an irate old lady was scolding the conductor for being two minutes past starting time, but he did not seem to hear, for he and the driver were engaged in conversation with a young man on the front platform. And who do you think that young man was? Of all people on the earth it was T.B.! The way that car tore to Henley Beach! Why it seemed barely five minutes ago since they were in Hindley-street. Now actually here they were sitting on the very steps where you are now, ma'am. He did most of the talking—very serious most of it seemed to be; his love shook her pretty head several times, and once she said, 'Oh no, no, I really could not do that.' Then T.B. declared his love did not care for him; her eyes grew full of tears, and she said he was very cruel to say that when he knew how she had deceived dear papa for his sake.

Then he said he was a horrid brute. His love said, 'Ah, no, he was her own dear darling, and she would think over what he had said.' They talked very softly, but my ears are sharp, ma'am, very sharp. I heard T.B. mention the married sister; he also spoke of the park lands, and I caught the words hansom cab. The waves lap-lapped against the pier. 'Do you know what the water sings, darling?' said T.B.; 'it sings "Success, happiness, home."' His love did not speak; she placed one hand in his, and he clasped it close. She looked out afar, where the violet haze seemed to veil inlets that had been golden, and in her eyes there seemed to dwell the reflection of that purple peace with a gleam of the glad light through. Then T.B. carved those letters, the while the waves sang their joyful song, children laughed and shouted on the beach, the setting sun dyed the waves with crimson, the waves danced on the shore. A mother called to her boys, 'It is time to go home.'

"Yes, it was nearly time to part. How swift the homeward ride! Past rustling reeds in swampy places, and on by gardens where the growth of half a century numbers the fast-slipping years; past fields bleached by stubble, and on by flats of lucerne, purple-flowered—on, on. The eastern sky before them held the reflected glory of the sunset, against which the dark hills were sharply defined. Now the lights of the streets gleamed in a long double line like the torches of a triumphant procession. From the car the lovers walked to North Adelaide. When they came to the Torrens bridge they paused and looked westward. The river seemed a silver path stretching out bright and fearless into the dusk.

Low in a lilac sky the crescent of the young moon showed above a palm. Behind them the dark hills, to which heavy clouds had come ; but facing them, like a fair promise, was the silver river, the young moon, and the palm. When T.B.'s love got home she found her father excited, warm, and cross, and he delivered himself thus—"So yer've come home, 'ave yer ; well, I 'ope it's the last time yer'll be treatin' me to the 'edache. Never coming home till eight o'clock, and leaving me ter entertain gentlemen visitors. Oh ! yes, open yer eyes wide at that. 'Owsomever, I ain't bin wastin' time. Boozeley's coming this day week for his answer. You mind it's yes, or not one penny o' my money do you get." She did not speak, but sat up late, writing a letter, which she posted next day herself. The evening of the following day she went early to bed—so did the whole household, her father declaring he felt 'right wore out, and what ailed that foolin' cow melon in the back garden, think he couldn't.' Have you ever ridden by night in a hansom cab with a man you loved better than anyone on earth?" asked the crab, sinking his voice confidentially. "Of course not," I gasped indignantly, "I'd like to meet the man who would dare to ask me." "I'll bet my claws that you *would*, ma'am," he assented cheerfully. I glared fiercely, but he continued calmly—"Well, then, you cannot imagine how T.B.'s love felt that night when she stepped into the hansom he had brought to take her away. He drew her face to his shoulder, and, putting his arm round her, said 'Darling!' He said it again next moment for fear his love had not heard ; and twice more, because she seemed pleased ;

and once again, because he felt he liked to say it. After that there did not seem much else worth saying. On through the dark went the lovers, to themselves the only realities the whole world held, all else faint and far as dream shadows. The moon was down, and the darkness seemed a kindly and protective presence. Soon the light of the married sister's house shone out like a bright star. The cab stopped; the married sister came to the gate and led them into the house. After a short talk with the sister's husband T.B. drove to his lodgings. Next morning he and his love were married. It would be desecration attempting to describe their happiness," said the crab pensively, and he seized the bottle, and, turning his goggly eyes on me, remarked—"I trust, ma'am, you admire the eloquent and beautiful language in which I relate this story, but I have been many years a member of 'The New South *Whales* Spouting Club,' and that gives one style, ma'am, style!" I bowed my appreciation of his merits, and after the necessary process of wetting his "whistle," I think he called it, he proceeded:

"On the following Saturday Ebenezer Boozeley rang at T.B.'s love's father's door. No one answered, and he had ample time to read a notice in the next garden, 'Wanted a young man to milk, cultivate, and drive a pair of ponies.' After ringing several times, he walked round to the back. There he found the old man gazing at a wilted cow melon. When he saw Boozeley he gave utterance to unpolite language. A quart bottle containing a small quantity of pale golden fluid was close by; possibly it was something beneficial as a restorative

—to cow melons ! He was also very red in the face, probably from his exertions in the garden. ‘Gone, sir,’ he said, ‘withered at the stalk—went in a cab—and weighed ten pounds more already than the one wot took the prize last year—to desert me in my old age, the viper. Dunno if that adjective dog next door done it or no, anyhow I’ll settle him—not a penny o’ my money shall he get, not a farden—Mrs. Grimes ! Mrs. Grimes ! bring me a bucket of suds—Florrie, did yer say ? well, if yer ’ad a eye to Florrie, she’s gone too—I’m a lonely, lonely man in my old age, and my pore ’ed is quite dazed like—it’s no good for the show, I’ll swop it off for milk.’ One minute, ma’am,” said the Crab, hoarsely, “I’m so dry, really——” The rest of the sentence was lost. He resumed : “This all happened four years ago. Last week T.B. and his love came down here, and with them came another T.B., as fine and handsome a child as one could wish to see. Now, I would not have believed—but there, you never can tell, you know ; but ’pon my shell, ma’am, I would not have thought a decent fellow like T.B. would have degraded himself by descending to such a barbarous pastime as crab-fishing. I came quite close to make sure my eyes did not deceive me, when somehow I became entangled in that disgusting net, and there was I—yes, I myself, ma’am, hauled up on the pier *en déshabillé*—in my blazer, as I had just been smoking a cigar after lunch. Rather pride myself on those cigars—get ’em at a little shop in Sand-street. His Serene Sliminess Headhard, Prince of Whales, deals there. D’ye know Whales ? He’s just immense—immense fun, I mean. However, to return to my ex-

perience on the pier. I made the best of matters, and bowed politely to T.B.'s love. She was a pretty creature, but not endowed with tact. 'Oh, darling,' she said, 'do put the poor ugly old crab back into the water. I'm sure he'll make us ill if we eat him. Ouf!' Even the prettiest women can be very *mal à propos*. T.B. demurred a little, then dived his hand into the net. I cherished no ill feeling, so warmly wrung his hand in right goodfellowship. There's no meanness in my nature, ma'am. What I do I do with my whole heart. But how often the best intentions are misunderstood. T.B. flung me out to sea in the rudest manner. Meantime, with many yells, he executed a dance, the prototype of which I witnessed when I was doing the Solomon Islands last year with my own particular pal, Lord Starfish. Such a gay fish, Starfy! We went out one evening to a small and early in the islands. Seven sweet little soles were there: Starfy proposed to each in turn, and was accepted by all. He left next day. Ah, gay young fish, Starfy, very!" "I do not believe there are any soles in the Solomon Islands," I said, severely. "No souls, ma'am! Bless my claws, don't say so; you'll ruin the missionary and whisky trade. T.B., his love, and child strolled to the beach. She leant upon his arm. They watched the child draw his pink dimpled feet through the wave foam. Happy trinity of love!

"In the evening they went home to their palace——"
"Their palace," said I, "bank clerks don't live in palaces. How many rooms has it got?" "Five," admitted the crab. "T.B. and his love always call it their palace. You should see their parlour—art muslin


curtains, white matting, easy chairs, and a luxurious couch for T.B. to rest on while his wife reads or sings to him after a cosy little dinner." "I should think the noise of the music would wake the child," I remarked, tartly. "Yes, he does wake sometimes; then he calls to his mother and she goes and tells him fairy tales. T.B. goes too; he says there is nothing he enjoys so much as a fairy tale." The crab's voice had been getting very drowsy for the past ten minutes, and now it ceased. I looked once more at the boldly carved initials, T.B. "But *who was* T.B.?" I asked. There was no answer—that horrid crab was stretched on his back and snoring loudly. "You disgraceful creature, you're as drunk as a fiddler," cried I, and prodded him with my umbrella. He fell into the sea with a loud splash. "Say, ole gal." I woke with a start and glared at the speaker—a small and dirty boy; he was neither impressed nor quelled. "Look at yer basket, it's jest a-sinkin'—yer pushed it orf with the umbrelly." "It was the crab," I said with dignity. The small boy laughed in a very impertinent manner. I came up from the steps and walked slowly down the pier: the sun had set an hour or more—the air was chilly; neuralgia had taken possession of my head, and evidently meant to keep it. Over the dark hills eastward the moon, some days past the full, climbed slowly up, and thick clouds suddenly veiled her face: dark shadows pressed about me—the world looked very dreary, but the waves were joyful, racing right merrily upon the sand, and musical with the glad song which they will sing adown the centuries to happy mortals like T.B. I thought of days long ago

when I did not have neuralgia—days when——. But the voice of reason said—“There you are, maundering off in mawkish sentimental fashion, as usual. What have you to do with love stories?” “*Nothing*,” said I.



THE DREAM CHILD :

A SKETCH.

OWN the Avenue of Chestnuts the gallant rode away, looking back the while with uncovered head. The sunlight fell through the fans of leaves and lingered on the bright hair, as though it loved to stay with so brave and gracious a gentleman. The lady stood in the shadow of the castle doorway and bowed farewell. She turned and went down the long, dark hall, from whose walls gallants and ladies looked down—gallants who had ridden away for ever, and ladies who had bowed farewell for aye. She went into a room in which an easel stood, bearing an unfinished picture. “I must work,” she said ; “in that is my only hope. He has gone down through the chestnuts for ever ! Oh ! my love ! my love ! To-morrow I must write the words I had not the courage to say !” The sun went down and the work was stayed ; the fire of pine logs alone lighted the room. The wind was a song of lament through the chestnuts and the river sobbed in the valley. The shadows of night fell on trees and river, but darker still were the shadows of sacrifice and renunciation which closed around the lady as she mused before the fire. . . . A sound was

in the hall: it came to the threshold of the room, into the room, and stopped before the fire. The sound was of bare feet pattering upon the polished floor. "Will you not look upon me?" said a sweet child-voice. The lady turned and looked upon a naked child. It climbed her knee and wrapped itself within the folds of her gown. It smiled up at her from the velvet and fur, and stretched its small pink feet to the fire, resting its head against her breast. "Thou dost not smile to see me?" it questioned, "and I have come from far. Many are the barriers I have broken through to come to thee." "Would they had been strong enough to withstand thee," wailed the lady, "and thou hadst never entered here. Thou must go hence." "Ah!" wept the child, "it is dark, and wide is the world. Surely thou wilt not send me wandering—I who fain would call thee by the sweetest name on earth! Let me but stay this night within thine arms; at dawn I will arise and go." "Nay," said the lady; "each instant thou dost tarry I love thee more. At dawn I *could not* let thee go!" "Thou wilt not let me go now!" the child laughed, putting its fair dimpled arms around the lady's neck. "Thou canst not let me go!" it called with glee, and pressed its rosy mouth to hers. "Thou canst not let me go, and I shall live to roam in the sunshine and gather the flowers!" "Alas!" sobbed the lady, "the bright sun is clouded and the flowers are gathered to lay upon the dead! Look, little child, into my heart!" (She bared her bosom to its gaze.) "What dost thou see, stamped as with fire?" "I see," said the child, in trembling tones, "a room

with heavy iron bars inside the panes. I see a room padded, and with scarcely any furniture. I see something creep and grovel on the floor, and now it rises up and utters fearful cries, and gibbers, and dashes itself against the wall. It is an old man." "And my father!" wept the lady. "Now thou knowest, O little child, why I dare not let thee stay, and why thou must never climb my knee nor call me by the sweet name of 'mother!' Thou must go forth, but not unclad." The lady put the child softly on the ground and wrapped him in a little mantle, very bright, for it was dyed with all the brightness of her life. "I love thee so!" sobbed the little child. "Ah, dearest heart, and I love thee! but now I must lead thee forth!" Down the long dark hall they passed forth from the castle door. The moon threw floods of silver light upon the world. The child passed into the light and the lady stayed in the shadow. "Farewell!" cried the child, and waved its tiny hands. It turned as it went down the Avenue of Chestnuts and looked back; its eyes were like to the eyes of the gallant who had ridden away—and neither would ever return!



SIMPSON'S VISION.

I THOMPSON—James Thompson—reside, or rather did reside, with two maiden aunts. A few days since I returned from a visit to the Continent. My aunts, who lived a considerable distance from Adelaide, decided that they must “go and meet dear James.” Accordingly theirs were the first faces which I recognized on landing at Largs Bay. They said they had come to town for the combined pleasure of meeting me and doing their winter shopping, and added they were staying at the “York.” I quickly persuaded them to leave it. “There can be no privacy at an hotel,” I urged. “Now, there is Simpson, his house is empty, save himself and cook. We will go there and stay till all business we have in town is finished.” In past times the comfort of my dear aunts was ever my first consideration.

I may say I lived for them. Spiteful people altered the preposition, but the world is *so* censorious. I maintain it is right that two maiden aunts with large interests in paying mines should receive from aforesaid nephew every care and attention. So to Simpson’s we went, and I must say were very kindly welcomed. Now, all who read this true story will know Simpson—if not this Simpson, yet will they recognize a Simpson of their own

acquaintance. I think of Simpsons it may be said, as Perkin Middlewick said of "lodging-house gals"—"Nature keeps a mould for 'em, and turns 'em out like buttons." Simpson had a taste for the telling of anecdotes and incidents at all times and seasons, and of telling them in an exasperatingly mysterious manner, which excited your curiosity against your inclination, and made you listen to the idiot although you knew you were in for his usual twaddle. And, somehow, twaddle, be it ever so twaddley, sounds not so twaddlish from a man owning a house with many comforts, spare rooms, a professional cook, and excellent wines and cigars; and I will do him the justice to say he was a most generous host. But to resume: Lunch over, I attempted conversation with my aunts—I say attempted, for did I but speak Simpson would interrupt with—"Ah, by the way, that reminds me of—" and then he would maunder on in an anecdote wide of purport from what I spoke of as the poles asunder. Growing desperate, I said I had seen the Awalim dance at Alexandria, and Simpson said that reminded him of a dance he'd attended but last week. I remarked the spectators 'must have felt interested; then, seeing suspicion in the eyes of my aunts, hastened to explain that the Awalim were like Cæsar's wife, and the dance they executed a national institution. In saying which I felt I did not compromise myself, as I do not happen to have been acquainted with Cæsar's wife, and as for the dance of the Awalim being a national institution—well, go to Alexandria and see for yourself.

Simpson, quite ignoring that my aunts must

necessarily be interested in my movements, addressed his wretched nonsense entirely to them, and of course they had to listen. I saw Aunt Jane Erminilda yawn nine times during half an hour—true, it was whilst I was giving a graphic description of a storm we had encountered at sea; but of course she took that opportunity to yawn, feeling it would be bad manners to do so when Simpson was talking.

I had just reached the most thrilling part of my narrative when Simpson interrupted—"By-the-by, that reminds me of——" I continued, mildly but firmly—"There came a crash enough to deafen one." "You will deafen us if you shout so," said Aunt Ethelberta Emily. My aunts always insisted on being named in full. I apologized meekly. "Pray go on, Mr. Simpson," said my aunts in chorus, and looked enraptured at him. I saw that look with a sinking heart: thus had they looked and listened to a Methodist preacher who once held "revivals" in our town. Thus had they continued to look and listen till my discovery of the, to me, thrice-blessed fact that he was engaged to a Miss Rose Parkinson. When I made this known to my aunts they had visibly paled, and with one voice proclaimed him a profane person, with misleading opinions. Fate—or, rather, Miss Parkinson—had cleared this danger from my path, and now here was Simpson obstructing it—a veritable Balaam's ass. I have been told when Simpson heard how I had spoken of him he said: "It was the angel who obstructed the path, and the ass who made a fuss about it." If Simpson did say that I'm certain he got it out of a newspaper. I'm positive I saw it in the

Register. "Wretched man," thought I, "who shall dispose of you?" He disposed of himself, strange as it may seem; but so it was. Stranger still, I am not thankful for—— Ah! but you shall hear. In his own words the idiot shall reveal himself. "You were saying, Mr. Simpson," cooed Aunt Ethelberta Emily, "that my nephew's somewhat lengthy story reminded you of—what? I fear my nephew James interrupted you; pray continue. The way in which you lead up to the climax of your anecdotes is charming." "Quite so," purred Aunt Jane Erminilda; "the little air of mystery you at first assume is delightful." Simpson glanced triumphantly at me. I quaked with apprehension. 'Tis true my aunts were fifty and more, and Simpson barely forty, but "hope springs eternal in the human breast," and in the bosom of elderly maiden ladies not only springs but bounds in a manner positively indelicate. Supposing, thought I, Simpson should perceive the interest my aunts took in him. He knew of their interest in Broken Hills. Suppose—— The voice of Simpson broke in on my meditations: "When Thompson spoke of a storm my thoughts reverted to the storm of last week, and also to one who during that storm sought the shelter of my roof, and has remained an inmate, and a welcome inmate, ever since." "How noble! how generous!" murmured my aunts. "He was a little boy I suppose," said Aunt Jane. "No, madam, he was a she, I mean—er—" Here Simpson became confused. "Oh, a little girl," interrupted both aunts, not quite so cordially. "No, she who cast herself upon my care was of adult years." My aunts looked

at each other, and stiffened visibly. I rejoiced. I knew the more they stiffened the limper grew Simpson's chance of a share in those Broken Hill dividends. "I shall never forget," said Simpson, gazing dreamily, before him, "the appealing glance of her exquisite brown eyes." Neither would he have forgotten the glance of my aunts' eyes had he seen it; but he did not, and continued: "I cannot better describe her entrance into my humble home than by quoting Pontet's beautiful song, 'A Vision:' 'She came—ah! let me well remember the day, the hour, the scene.' Alone and brooding by my lonely hearth one dark November day—it was not November, you know, but poet's licence, eh?" "Pray proceed," said my aunts in acid tones. Distasteful as this narration seemed to them, they, suspecting the improper, felt it their sacred though painful duty to hear this shocking story to the end, so as to be able to judge, you know: this is always the reason why people read divorce reports—"so as to be able to judge, you know." "I sat and watched the fitful flame," pursued Simpson, "and on the air there came a plaintive wail—sobbing, sobbing, as if some heart did break. When, hark! through the silent corridors"—(Simpson's passage is about five feet wide)—"there came a sound —" "As of a silken robe?" I asked, sarcastically; "if so, I think the costume must have suffered in the storm." "Her garment was washing silk," said Simpson mildly. "but there was no sound as of a silken robe—the only sound I heard was a timid knock, and on my door a gentle hand was laid. I opened it, and my vision stood before me!" Here Simpson seemed lost in retrospect.

"Go on," said my aunts, in awful tones. He was rushing to his doom I saw, but he seemed lost to everything but the sensation of some powerful emotion. I do not err when I say that Simpson's portly frame seemed positively quivering with some powerful feeling. He turned his chair so that the waning winter afternoon light fell behind him, and in a voice he strove to steady, continued—"Never shall I forget the pitiful accents in which she besought my aid for her baby son, a handsome little fellow, greatly resembling his mother."

"Oh, a married lady," said my aunts. "I think not; she has not spoken of her husband to me nor I of him to her." "I quite believe that," said I. Simpson heeded not, but added—"She and her son were clad in deep black." "A widow!" screamed my aunts. "I suppose so," said Simpson. "But the past life of any lady coming beneath my roof is sacred from inquiry on my part." My aunts did not seem so thankful as, in my opinion, they should have been. "There must be sorrowful and tender recollections in the lives of all. Is it not Victor Hugo who says, 'Who can tell the sufferings of females?'" "He said 'women,'" remarked I. "It's all the same," said my aunts, with a sudden access of feeling and a fine disregard of common sense. "All the same!" said I. "Why, a cow's a female!" "It's cowardly of you to say so," said Simpson, softly, and resumed. "Into each life some rain must fall!" "True," assented my aunts, in voices suggestive of having come through deep waters. "A good deal of rain must have fallen into your heroine," I said, in as dry a tone as the subject admitted. "No," said Simp-

son ; " she had fallen into it, though it was not from her lips I learned that the rain had formed a deep pool on the waste ground opposite. Into this her little son had fallen, and would have perished had not his mother bravely plunged in and rescued him." " Well," said I, " at most she only wetted her boots and petticoats ! " My aunts sought their handkerchiefs and coughed. " She does not wear them," said Simpson. " Sir ! " said my aunts. " I mean the boots," said Simpson, hurriedly ; " as to—to the other, er—er—I mean the apparel of any lady beneath my roof is as sacred from inquiry as her past history." " Did she stay ? " asked Aunt Ethelberta, in icy accents. " I am happy to say she did, madam. Like all her charming sex, she was a trifle shy at first. She frequently went to the gate and would stand pensively gazing down the street and sigh heavily ; but I used every inducement to persuade her to remain, and but a few days back I knew, by the warmth of her greeting caress, that she loved me—she, my vision ! my well-beloved and beautiful friend." My aunts groaned. " She is a great comfort to my lonely life," he went on ; " a great comfort. She fetches my slippers and the morning paper, and brings my hat and cane, and she has quite won me from a bad habit I had of continuing to read after meals were announced." " And the little boy ? " said my aunts, fondly. " Her son," answered Simpson, and his face darkened, " has a taste for digging in the garden, which I have *not* encouraged." I fancied that he had used other means of dissuasion than mere passive discouragement, and felt sorry for the youngster in question. " No, I must

admit he is not so companionable as his mother, nor so ornamental ; in fact, he shows a tendency to weediness in the legs, of which his mother is guiltless." "Sir!" shrieked my aunts, rising to their feet. "Pray be seated," I urged. "Our tram does not go till half-past seven," and I considered dinner at an hotel an unnecessary and expensive outlay. "Perhaps," I suggested, "the lady wears the Bloomer costume." "She does," said Simpson. "It's terrible," said my aunts. "No ; it is most becoming," smiled Simpson. "Does she *never* speak of her husband?" "Never," replied Simpson. "But," said Aunt Ethelberta, "surely this young—er—er—" "Female," suggested Simpson. "Person," amended my aunt—she evidently regarded the generic term with suspicion. "You cannot intend that this young person shall remain here without a protector." "I have constituted myself that, madam," said Simpson—his portly form again seemed to thrill with powerful emotion. "Simpson!" said I sternly. "You must be much pushed for room," pursued Aunt Jane, with that fatal tendency to push inquiry which always brings disaster in its train. "The advent of this young person," said my aunt, "must inconvenience you greatly." "Oh, not at all, madam," said Simpson, "she shares my room." A shriek! "Wretch!" in shrill tones—"Reprobate!" in shriller, and we were alone. "Simpson, how could you," said I with stern virtue—"be such a fool?" I concluded feebly, as the full horror of the situation dawned on me. He answered not. He was again a prey to the emotion with which he had contended during the recital of this narrative. What

was that emotion? Grief? no—remorse? no; it was laughter! “Dolt! idiot!” I thundered. “Who is she? where is she?” “She’s on the lawn,” gasped Simpson, “and if you want to save enough of those evil-minded old aunts of yours to hold an inquest on, you’d better go and see to them.” I looked through the window: in that moment of time my aunts had becloaked, goloshed, and bonneted themselves, and backing, as though in the presence of royalty, they gradually retired through Simpson’s choicest flower-beds, closely followed by the “Vision.” Aunt Erminilda suddenly measured her length in a tulip bed which had cost Simpson a small fortune, and there lay, the recipient of the affectionate demonstrations of the “Vision’s” son. I spoke persuasively to the “Vision;” she heeded not, but plainly gave me to understand my presence was not required. Then Simpson came and dispersed the “Vision,” and said he had no idea she had such propensities. What my aunts said I will leave unrecorded. They walked away, shaking their umbrellas in the face of Simpson. I was about to follow them, with that devotion to the cause of the afflicted which has ever been one of the most beautiful traits in my character: “Begone,” cried my aunts, waving their umbrellas perilously near my nose. “Stay with your reprobate associate, sir,” indicating the guilty author of this unlucky story with another flourish; then they hailed a passing cab and drove away. I turned to Simpson. I intended to expostulate mildly with him, for I am not one to bear malice—at least, not to those who have comfortable homes. “Simpson,” I

began. "Stuff," he interrupted ; " I hope this will be a lesson to you not to make my house an hotel, as you were ever in the habit of doing." Then he went into the house and shut the door. I always knew that Simpson was a cad.

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A fortnight has passed since these awful events happened. I have received a letter from my aunts, stating they have altered their wills (which were in my favour) and bequeathed all their property to the Y.M.C.A. " Your esteemed aunts," wrote the man of law, " have not done this without mature consideration. They think it their duty to aid, as largely as possible, a society which aims at the propagation of *virtue* among the youth of this colony. Your esteemed aunts desire to intimate that this notice is final, and no further attention will be paid to any communication from you." The Dorcas (of which my aunts are members) has met twice since Simpson's " Vision" dispelled all mine, and I hear that Simpson says he is going to sell off and go exploring with Lindsay, as even in the pathless desert he could not be more destitute of respectable society than he is rapidly becoming here.

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I see in the columns of this morning's *Register* the following notice :—" Lost, Black Retriever, answers to the name of ' Vision.' Reward on bringing same to Plantagenet Simpson, Holly Lodge, Medindie."

SUE TO JACKSON'S.



UE sits on Jackson's front doorstep, her occupation, according to the parlance of Severn's Place, "bellerin'." The reason of such occupation, also in local speech, is that "Jackson 'as bin at it agen, and walloped Sue." Jackson is generally "at it," if the testimony of Severn's Place is true, and the neighbours appear to have little else to record of him since that day, five years ago, when he first came into the life of the Place, bringing with him a cartload of dilapidated furniture and a child some four years old. "'E ain't sech a dusty ole man," a lady resident of the Place had remarked, on the day of his arrival, as she returned from an inspective call at Jackson's—a pleasure which had been combined with the more material business of borrowing a saucepan. Jackson, being of convivial habits, and entertaining no lofty views calculated to make his neighbours feel they in any way fell short of perfection, has had the verdict of the primal caller confirmed by the Place in general. On the other member of his household, the opinion of the Place, directed by the same lady (who rejoices in the name of Janks) is not favourable. "The kid's a reg'lar limb, ma'am, that's wot she is," confided Mrs. Janks to Mrs.

Stebbins, her "nex' door;" "and mark my speech, ma'am: I mayn't be 'ere to 'ave nollidge of it, seein' the way Janks do go on, but, sure as you and me is a-standin' by this 'ere fence, Sue to Jackson's will go to the bad." "She's a limb, is Sue to Jackson's," agrees the Place, with but one voice dissentient, and that hardly counts, it is so weak: the voice of Sammy, the crippled son of the cobbler. "If I wuz you, Sue, I wouldn't be've so," suggests Sammy, pausing on his way to school to survey the weeping damsel; "Dry yer eyes and come along o' me." "I sha-a-arn't, an' if yer wuz me yer'd do as I do; yer'd be a limb—that's wot I am." Sammy, with a sigh, goes schoolward. Sue, having given a few extra vigorous howls for his edification, decides further exhibition of her vocal powers but waste of strength and time—not that she values either; but, becoming conscious of an irritable state of fatigue, she saunters from the Place down two or three other close, ill-smelling lanes—each one as unlovely and as populous with slatternly gossips and noisy, dirty children as the Place—and comes into a wide, tree-planted street. Sue amuses herself for a while picking up the fallen gold-coloured leaves of the Moreton Bay fig trees and forming them into a fan, wherewith she fans herself after the manner of a gorgeously appparelled lady who perennially fans and leers from the vantage of an almanac at Sammy's. But the ways of the great are tiring; the pelting of passing dogs with the little withered figs proves more attractive. Even this pleasure palls, and the day is still young. Along the street are tasteful villas with pretty gardens

filled with flowers. How she would like to gather some ; but the blinds of the houses are all up, and the windows have a watchful look. At the end of the street are the park lands—no flowers there ; but beyond are the hills, the country ! Oh ! great idea. She, Sue, will go out to those hills all by herself. On holidays she has been taken thereby Sammy's father, in company with Sammy ; but then the cobbler always walked about muttering to himself and never answered questions, while Sammy did little but lie on his back and look at the clouds. " Ain't they lovely," the cripple had asked. " Yes," the limb had admitted, " but when things is pritty I wants to put my 'ands on em and bring em close." In the bosom of her ragged frock are three coppers, one given by Sammy, the other two abstracted from Jackson after he had " bin at it again," and coming home had, with nervous hand, dropped some coins on the floor. Sue decides to take the Kensington tram, which will land her within easy walking distance of the hills, about the foot of which are gardens—large gardens, into which it is possible to slip unseen and gather flowers unreprieved.

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Oh ! what delight to Sue to paddle her dusty tired little feet in the creek ; to munch watercress, unwotting of hydatids ; to finally, in an ecstasy, take off the few rags she owns and roll in the rippling water ! What shivers of delicious dread are hers as she ventures one dimpled foot into a deep pool and feels the oozy water-weeds. But even pleasures such as these must end : shivers threaten, and it is comforting to Sue to sit in

the sun and eat the bread experience has taught her always to carry with her, for it is Jackson's custom to lock the door of their house and give Sue the key of—the street! Presently, following the creek, she comes to a garden, gay and beautiful, though somewhat neglected. The birds are calling among the tall trees, and flowers peer out from the tall grass: it seemed a paradise to the peri without. There is a gate to this paradise, but the peri slips through the broken fence. What bunches of flowers that sinful peri gathers—what dozens of loquats she eats, and then she lies down under a mossy old apple tree and falls asleep for a long time. The sun is well down in the west, when an ant, coming home with a dead beetle which has taken all day to move, finds Sue lying across his own direct short cut, and sharply informs her of his disapproval of such obstruction. The child starts up with a cry and rubs the smarting limb. Gathering up the flowers which in sleep have fallen from her hands (how faded they look now!) she begins her homeward walk. She feels very tired and hungry—Severn's Place and supper do not seem so very undesirable. Wearily the little tired feet drag along the dusty road. It is very late when she gets back. Never in all her life can Sue remember to have seen such an illumination of the Place. Guy Fawkes Night with its squibs pales before this. From every door heads are thrust forth, and candles, held awry, drop oleaginous tears. A small crowd has gathered in the street, around the lamp. There is the cobbler with a lighted lantern, and Sammy, weeping bitterly, is shielding a candle with a broken bottle. The central

figure of the crowd is Jackson, in a maudlin state of grief, with the tears streaming down his face. "Ah," he says, "she's gone for hever. My only chile, the ji of my declinin' years." He pauses, mops his face with his hat, and goes on—"Perhaps, even now, she's a blessed hangel with a golden crown a-looking down on her pore old par." Dreaded sight! on the outskirts of the crowd stands a policeman. But so overcome is Sue by the paternal eloquence and want of food, that she lifts her voice and cries—"Aw, aw, boohoo, boohoo, I ain't a hangel, I've come back." "Yer little varmint," yells Jackson, advancing to the shrinking figure, steadying himself with a lurch, "I'll teach yer." And it is to be presumed he does, for a few minutes later, when the illumination has died out, the drear stillness of the Place is broken by the sound of blows and the wailing of a child. The air is chill, and the inhabitants of the court—though given to late hours—are within doors, and none see a forlorn little figure slip from Jackson's house, creep through the lanes into the wide tree-planted street and wave its hands towards the hills, lying black and solemn against the star-lit, steely sky. "Good-bye! good-bye!" sobs a child's voice, "I'll come back to yer some day and stay always." The promise is fulfilled in later years.

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Seven years have gone by since Sue's excursion to the country, and now she is setting out on another. But such a different Sue! She is still "Sue to Jackson's," for the early title clings to her. Jackson's looks smarter than in

those other days. There are curtains to the windows and flowers on the sill, and though Jackson is "still at it," in the pungent phrase of Severn's Place, Sue is boss of the shop. Little schooling has been hers, but natural quickness and the perusal of much literature of the *Bow Bells* kind—no mean factor in the shaping of common clay—has given her a slight refinement; but if she was as vulgar as her surroundings most men, in looking at her, would forget the fact, for Sue is beautiful: a brilliant brunette—a regular out-and-outer, say the ardent swains of her own class, whom she mercilessly flouts. She works in a factory; but to-day is the Market Gardeners' picnic, and Sue is going to be there. Like many in her own station, she is ignorant of how to fashion the few cheap clothes she wears, but she has saved enough to have made a pink zephyr gown. Is it to be wondered at that, coming home to that squalid neighbourhood and meals of ill-cooked food, weary with the monotony of daily toil, Sue neglects the advantages offered by the Sewing School and spends her earnings instead at the dancing class, and snatches the one excitement—poor as it is—which serves to brace her tired nerves and make her pulses beat in rhythm to the music. A rumour has been afloat in Severn's Place of late that a "reel gentleman," with a gold ring and a gold watch chain, has come home with Sue several times as she returned from dancing. On hearing this Mrs. Janks has shaken her head and repeated her early prophecy with regard to Sue to Jackson's. Undaunted by these dismal croakings, the beautiful pagan has put on her pink gown and a muslin hat with cheap pink roses and has gone to the

picnic. It is a perfect day ; the band plays lively airs, the grass is smooth for dancing, the vans and carts are works of art, with their lovely floral decorations, and the sleek horses which draw them are a credit to their owners. Groups of beautiful trees provide shade for the hundreds of people who are picnicking in the paddocks. The vine-clad hills, with their lights and shadows, are charming to look upon. Ah ! this is a day of days to shine upon this rustic revel. A revel truly, where gaping Phillis cannot choose but hear the vile blasphemies of Phryne. Here Glycera, in scarlet silk, threatens to do for Lais in violet velveteen ; there Strephon has left Chloe to weep neglected, while he gazes fatuously in the face of Phyrre, amber-haired ; but Sue, unheeding, strolls from group to group, observing each with mirthful eyes. There a family are consuming a dinner which, under ordinary circumstances, would last any but "hill people" a week. Further on an ancient dame, whose best bonnet must have come out with her when she emigrated thirty years ago, holds on her lap with stoic force a squirming infant, whose shrieks rend the air. "Perhaps it's a pin," suggests the untidy, drawling mother. "Now't sort," says she of the ancient bonnet, with a jerk of the head toward a stolid-looking girl gazing wide-eyed at the sporting of Amaryllis in the shade—"It's that dirty 'uzzy, M'riar, never washed the feed bottle ; just take a sniff at un " Here, among unwashed plates and greasy sheets of crumpled newspaper, a shrewish looking woman "nags" her placid-faced husband: "Look at the mullock I'm left ter clean," she cries, "while Poll and Jane Ann struts at the dancing, and John goes drinkin' at t' booth."

"Feyther, wake oop, I tell 'ee. Lard did I ever hear a man snor' so, like a pig. Do ye see that storm cloud out Athelstone way?" She points where a cloud stands up like a mountain—a mountain that has caught on its snow the glow of burnished copper, and faintly mirrors on its surface the blue of the opposite heavens. "Wake oop, I zay; an' did thee bring the turporlin' fur cart?" Feyther moves uneasily, then in deprecating tones: "Law, mawther, what a wumman thee be to think of all, sure-ly." "Thee forgot it, did thee? I thowt as much, thee stoopid vule! Ta'ake that!" A ringing slap falls on the beaming face, and Sue, sauntering on, hears the voice of this uncanonized South Australian saint uttering the response which suffering has sanctified to a Litany: "Law, mawther, what a wumman thee be, sure-ly." "A lady" from the "Emerald Isle" is having a heated argument with a man whose duty it is to prevent persons of frugal minds from entering the grounds without payment. "A shilling, is it, you've the bouldness to ax," shrills the defaulter. "Long toime 'twill be, ould man, before you see the colour of my money, I'm thinkin'. Shilling, indade! if 'twas going to pay a shilling I wuz, what for did I demane meself crawlin' troo the fince loike a baste av the field?" The day wanes: an air comes up from seaward and shakes faint whispers in the gum trees, and, passing to an olive plantation, transmutes each bush to quivering silver. Sue, leaning on the eastern fence of the paddock, watches the wind lifting the olive leaves. "Sue," says an educated voice. She starts, and a flush of pleasure comes to her lovely face as she turns and sees the well-dressed, good-looking young man beside

her. "'Ow did you know it was me when my back was turned?" "Would I not know you anywhere, among ten thousand," he answers glibly. "What brought yer?" she asks, shyly. He is about to answer "You"—such second nature it is to men of his ilk to lie to a pretty woman; then, reflecting that she is too sharp to be deceived, says—"To see the crowd." He leans on the fence beside her and looks her over with bold eyes. "You are the loveliest little girl I have ever seen," he says, deliberately. "Oh! do you mean it?" Sue asks, turning a little to him and her breath coming quickly. "On my honour," answers he, looking her full in the face. *On his honour!* He may without fear lay anything on that, for, after the manner of the magician's well-cover, it always presents an assurance of safety to the new comer, and gives no hint of the fate of previous passers by. Many of the vans have left the ground. Respectable persons are taking themselves off, mostly on foot or by train, and several persons not respectable are being taken off by the police. The distant sea is a flood of silver, surmounted by a band of clear apricot sky; high to the zenith are piled roan-coloured clouds, each under edge gilded. "O, isn't it lovely," says Sue, "out there over the sea: it must be 'eavenly to live where one can see the sun set, and have trees and flowers always to look at. There is nothing pretty in Severn's Place, and do you know I feel kind of pining there, and wish—oh! how often—I could be a bird, to fly away and live in those beautiful hills, where I once spent—oh! such a happy day." "Did you, darling? We will get a cab and drive out there again,

and you shall tell me all about it." They drive towards the hills, the clear green of which shows distinctly against the rose flush of the eastern sky. From the kangaroo hedges the Bourcault roses and briar blossoms show their pink faces, and the flowering broom drops its gold. In gardens the hollyhocks stand tall and stately : their high points of unblown buds suggest bell'd pagodas. In paddocks the evening primrose shows its pathetic face. The moon rises a pale yellow disc, against which trees are outlined as if cut from black velvet. Sometimes the road is girt with willows or poplars, among whose roots a stream of water runs ; sometimes it skirts vineyards, whence comes the peculiar odour of vines newly topped, and from the gullies the night cuckoo's softly plaintive note is heard. Now they are slowly ascending the steep cutting on the face of the hill, and deep down on one side like the patterns in embroidery are seen the market gardens, with their wealth of fruit trees in bloom. The evening mists gather in the gullies like a fading veil. Sue is silent with delight, and her lovely eyes are misty with unshed tears, as she looks on all the beauty of this evening, and thinks of Severn's Place. For Jackson's Sue has, notwithstanding her sordid surroundings, that gift of the gods, a love of nature and of all things beautiful. Happy the mortals are who possess this love, with the power to gratify it, to whom their "lines are cast in pleasant places," where far from the "madding crowd" the clouds, the sunsets, trees, plants, and flowers, the lights and shadows of morning, noonday, and night, each and all thrill the heart with rapture and are a daily feast which never palls, but sanctifies

the heart and lifts the mind to adoration of their Creator, and which brings a peace which naught else can give. Riches elude our grasp, and our dearest ties are wrenched asunder, and our idols are found to be but clay, but this is a love which never fails, a joy in prosperity, a sweet consoler in sorrow.

But, alas ! poor Sue, breathing the air of a stifling back room, the sole look-out from day to day a high brick wall, deafened by the noise of sewing machines, returning at evening to the squalid court and a home devoid of all but the barest necessities of life, with no companion but a drunken father ! What wonder that her repressed and starved artistic instincts accepted any means to gratify their longing. As they drive back some heavy clouds hide the moon, and the land before them is veiled in blackness. "We are leaving the light and going into the dark," Sue whispers ; and the man questions, "But with me you are not afraid to go into the dark, are you, sweetheart ?" "No, I shall never be afraid. I will come to the end of the world if you wish." As she speaks, across the darkness trails the light of a falling star.

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One stifling January day, fourteen months later, it is known in Severn's Place that "Sue is back to Jackson's." During the time that has elapsed since Sue attended the picnic she has been as utterly lost to the Place as though the earth had closed over her. None were at a loss to surmise what had become of her. She was not the first girl who had gone forth from the Place never to return.

Mrs. Janks had taken upon herself the glory of fulfilled prophecy, and remarked to Mrs. Stebbins—"Just as I told you from the fust, ma'am." Jackson had raved and wept, and to solace his outraged paternal feelings had "gone at it" with renewed vigour. There had been some slight wonder as to "who Sue had got hold of;" then she shared the fate of the absent, and was forgotten by all. Sammy alone remembered and pitied her, and felt sorrow that the one ornament of Severn's Place was gone. Mrs. Janks, going to the "Blooming Rose" for a drop of something agen the 'eat, meets Jackson returning from a like errand, carrying a plate of chops. "The prodigal," he announces, "'as returned from wallerin' in the mire—'as come back from the swine and the 'usks." "More belike come back to 'em, I'm thinking," remarks Mrs. Janks, with the candid criticism which is a feature of Severn's Place. "But," continues Jackson, whose maudlin state finds pleasure in Scriptural quotations, "I'm a-bearing 'ome the fatted calf," and he waves aloft the plate ostentatiously.

"I've just bin in ter 'ave a look at that gal," remarks Mrs. Janks an hour later to Mrs. Stebbins. "Yer'd 'ardly credit what a perfec' wreck she is—all eyes and cheekbones. 'Well, yer are a guy, Sue,' says I; 'not ez I ever did think you much to look at.' But she never took no more notice o' me than if I'd bin the wall, the ill-mannered 'uzzy." Sammy hears the news when he comes home from work, and calls in to see Sue. "Well, Sue," he says, his small wizened face lit up with joy that even this poor remnant of a life's love has drifted back. "Well, Sue," he repeats. "I ain't well—I never shall

be"—says a hoarse, sullen voice from the wasted wreck who lies on the miserable colonial sofa. "No, yer ain't now, but yer will be when we've got yer nussed up a bit, Sue, dear. I think I'll straighten up a bit now, if you'll let me make so bold." He moves carefully about the untidy, frowsy room. "Wot's the good of tryin' to clean this place; it's like my life—all ugliness and dirt." "The will o' the Lord," begins Sammy gently. "The will o' the Lord!" gasps the harsh voice. "I'm sick o' the will o' the Lord. Wot's the Lord ever done for me?" "Did you ever do aught for the Lord, Sue?" The dark head turns restlessly—"No, I hadn't time, and no one taught me, and I didn't care to. Whenever disagreeable things happened people always said, 'It's the will of the Lord,' and I felt thankful not to think of Him."

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The days pass on—she is very, very ill. "She won't last long," Mrs. Janks announces to Mrs. Stebbins cheerfully, Sammy having from his poor earnings paid the former lady to see to the sick girl. It is his custom to come early in the morning to see her before he goes to work, creeping softly, with bootless feet, to the window where her bed is drawn so that she can see the bit of sky above the opposite houses. Sometimes she is asleep, turning restlessly; sometimes awake, her large dark eyes strained wide open, but noting nothing. He comes again in the evening and reads aloud to her, more as a comfort to himself than any consolation to her. He doubts if she even hears, but he is mistaken. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; He maketh me

to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside still waters." "In green pastures," repeats the sick girl, turning suddenly. "Sam, put down the book for a bit and listen to me. When I'm dead—now, don't take on so, Sam, I'm not worth it; I always was a limb, and not no good. You'd have done well by me, yer say. Yes, I know yer would, but I wasn't one to be well done by. Do you remember when I was little how I always wanted to touch beautiful things and bring them close to me? Well, I've thought it all out as I've bin lying here, and I know that is what I've always wanted. Life is so ugly, ain't it, in Severn's Place? I've thought, sometimes, if I'd been taught to cook proper and how to do up the house a bit like clean folks has things, 'stead o' learning names of places no one ever talks of, or learning how to spell words one never uses, I'd bin able to do a bit better. But I knew nothing. I had to go to the factory, and it's such poor pay, an', an'—but things won't never be different. I s'pose some's born to be bad, an' die this way. But, listen. Do yer know why I come back 'ere? Do yer know why I didn't go to the river? I knew you was 'ere, and I brought this"—and she takes a little purse which was hidden in the bosom of her gown—"it's to bury me. Take me out in the country, Sam; I'd like to lie where it looks nice out there. On the top of those pretty hills there is a pretty church, with trees all about, and you see all round for miles an' miles, an' the organ birds sing mornin' an' evenin'—oh, so lovely! Take me there, Sammy; promus me yer will." He promises, and she knows the promise will be fulfilled. "Now, go,

Sammy—yer mustn't lose yer rest. Good-night." It is a long "good-night" she has bidden him. None hear a faint voice, as the dawn is breaking, cry, "I am going into the dark ; I am alone and afraid."

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A few miles out of Adelaide, on the top of one of the beautiful hills, is a little churchyard, where tall gum trees sway in the wind. There the birds are unmolested, and the olives drop their purple berries on the grass which covers "the just and unjust." There, in the spring, the flowers stain the grass with scarlet blossoms. There moulders to dust the girl who in life craved to lay her hands upon the beautiful and bring it close.



THE PRINCESS FAL LAL.

EXTRACTS FROM AN UNFINISHED STORY.

FAL LAL TO SOBERSIDES.



YOU are just the kind of girl a man would fall in love with—for a week, then he would go away and probably speak of you as the “best girl he ever knew,” and pray the gods he might never see you again. How long was he in love with you? You never said anyone was in love with you? No; and you never said anyone was out of love with you, but I know it. Your friends—(“I have none!”)—your acquaintances, then, say, “Ah! poor thing, her health is very bad—how she *has* gone off!” Did it ever strike you that verb might be declined “He has gone off, she has gone off.” You have told them you suffer from what—neuralgia? How long was he in love with you? Come, answer, I will weary you with importunity until you tell me. “A fortnight.” A fortnight! Poor man, he was not wise. A fortnight! I fear, then, he does not think of you as the best girl he ever met; I fear, my dear Sobersides, he may have become a trifle bored in a fortnight. “Cease,” I cry. Yes, she

says, coming to me and putting her arms round me, I will cease, and so must you—you must cease to cry at night; you must cease to have that hard ring in your voice; you must cease to write such poetry as “Alone” and “Never More.” Ah, Sobersides! the songs of Sappho did not ease her heart. The ode to Phaon was the swan’s song. If every faithless Phaon, now-a-days, were bewailed in verse, the world would be deafened with the cackling of geese. ’Tis not in song the Phaon of to-day is lamented. Sappho has learned discretion, and with one last look of agony on her lost illusion, she “buries her dead,” and walks forth, no longer a woman, but a statue—hard, cold, and unsympathetic. Look around, dear Sobersides—you may see such every day. Thank the gods, I am going to save you from becoming a “fossil.” By-the-by, did he say, “Let our love a secret be, eh?” Oh, simple Sobersides! My dear, the young man of the present day has no romance. If he talks of secrecy, mistrust him. Only place your affections on men who immediately after proposing ask if they may see your dad or nearest relative interested in your welfare. And let me tell you, Sobersides, even a shy fish may be irretrievably hooked if, after he has proposed at noon, the news is well circulated through the town by 9 p.m. Pa, in confidence, tells a “few dear boys” at the club, and Ma whispers it to a “few dear friends”—she must tell them of dear Arabella’s happiness.

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I see your diary is like the Phrygian hole: into it you whisper what your mind cannot contain. You say here

you could forget him but for your dreams, which bring him again so vividly to you that at night you are in his presence, unspeakably happy, only to wake each morning and go through a fresh agony of losing him. I suppose, said Fal Lal, musing, you really did love him. "Loved him," cried Sobersides, "Oh!" Yes, yes: then reflect that it was his choice to leave you—that he was happier without you; and if you still love him, leave him alone; that being left alone is the one thing a man feels grateful for when the passing fancy is dead. If you are not equal to this high philosophy, try and imagine him standing on his head—then I'll promise you'll cease to dream of him. Once I fondly loved one of the handsomest men who ever walked down Collins-street; I knew it was hopeless: he was destined to marry money. I persuaded him to grow a beard, and to come and see me every day while it was growing. On the tenth day my love died—each hair of that stubbly beard was an arrow in its heart.

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A MODEL GOOSEBERRY.

She was one of those women who know how long and stony a road is when one has few illusions wherewith to beguile the way. However, she was of the stuff from which heroines are made: she had gifts which are rarer than heroism—the gift of effacing herself, of never remembering a conversation she happened to overhear or a confidence which was afterwards regretted. She was shortsighted (so she said) when taking country

walks with two people who appeared interested in each other, and generally became afflicted with a mysterious weakness of the ankles which compelled her to walk so slowly that no one could be expected to suit their pace to hers. She was much beloved by all save prudes and gossips. The former remonstrated with her—"You must have known: you should have told, for the public good." She answered "she was sure with such an example as they set the public could not fail to be good." They said—"Well, well, my dear, but really you are very lenient." The gossips said—"Such a stupid woman! she knew all about it and never said a word!" . . . "You are sure you will not come any farther," said the gentlemen, trying to infuse polite regret into his tone and failing lamentably. "Quite certain," says she reassuringly. "The view from this point is quite the best. Thank you, you're very good, but no one fixes my sketching things quite as I like. You must go on with Mary and see the view from the further hill—it is lovely." She takes the camp stool and sketch-book and turns away with such a business-like air that Mary and her lover feel quite left out, and walk on in silence. The new road was not made then; the trees almost met overhead, shading the track that led them past the picturesque little church out on to the brow of the hill. Some men felling a tree remarked—"Courtin' couple!" "I reckon so, an' a 'ansome pair too. They be going past where Daddy is at work. Lord help 'em. I heer'd the boss tell Daddy to take a turn at the caterpillars, and in consekence he have got the Scripters strong." Have you ever walked along the

old road by Moraba in September when the wind came up from the sea, making the overhanging trees whisper a thousand songs of the woods—when there had been rain in the night and the sun afterwards brought out the scent of the briar leaves and the aromatic perfume of the Australian gum trees? Have you noted the rich brown and gold of the new gum leaves, their silver gleaming trunks and branches? Have you looked down through the opening of the gullies to where the sea lay—a bar of sapphire; and across the plains, where the city rises fair and white as if carved in ivory; and away to the north, where belts of purple timber, green cornfields, and fields of yellow sorrel blended together like an exquisite mosaic? If you have once looked on it you will remember the scene Mary and her lover were looking at. “Hi, there!” calls a feeble, querulous voice. “Hi, mister!” and its owner stumbles up to the fence at the side of the hill. “Can yer tell me the time o’ day?” “Half-past three,” says the gentleman. “Eh?” “Half-past three?” “I be very hard o’ hearing. Don’t go on. Now, what did yer say the time was?” “Half-past three.” “Lard! lard! how long the days do be surely! Yer want to know what I be ’a doin’, I suppose,” proceeds the aged owner of the voice, hanging himself on to the fence. The lady does look interested—the gentleman otherwise. “Well, well, it’s pickin’ up caterpillars I am off these yere young peas, ’a cuttin’ them in ’arf,” and he holds up a wriggling inch of pale green, and, flourishing a rusty pair of scissors, illustrates the fact. “Just as ’twas in Jonah’s time—never a gourd but a worm to gnaw it. But, there, Jonah

got some satisfacshun. He up and says to the Lord wot he thought about sech conduct. And the Lord respected him for it. Sez to Jonah, 'Dost thou do well to be angry,' sez He; an' Jonah up and sez, 'That I do.' Ah, there ain't the likes o' Jonah now-a-days, and so I sez to passon. Took it as summat pussonal, passon did, and says as I'm reg'lar blasphemius—reg'lar blasphemius, he did." He repeated the words with evident relish. "'Caterpillars,' sez passon, 'is sent by the Lord.' Sez I, 'If the Lord knows as caterpillars is to be picked up, why don't he make them darned insex go round on their hinders, so as a body can git at em. Can yer tell me that, now?' sez I. No, passon couldn't. Strangers round here, I s'pose?" "Yes," said the lady, in a smothered voice. "Ah! thought so, or yer 'ad knowed me; most round ere knows me. Going to Moraba?" "No." "Well, now, yer should; nicish place is Moraba. Know the Moraba people?" "No." "Ah! well, nicish people, the Moraba people are; always says good-day to them, I does"—this with an air of great condescension. "Your young man, I s'pose, Miss?" "No!" sharply from the lady, and a laugh from the gentleman. "Yer ain't honeymooners, are yer? I watched yer round the corner, and I knowed honeymooners would never have come so far without poking their 'eds under each other's 'ats. Married some time, p'r'aps?" "No!" sharply, this time from the gentleman. "It must be dry work," he continues; "suppose you take this," tendering a coin. "Well, it ain't my custom to accept nothin' from the stranger and alien, but as you're so pressing I can't refuse. And I wishes you and the young woman a pleasant walk," and

with a parting nod he shambles off in the direction of the village alehouse.

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How quickly the mists were gathering in the gullies, and how cold the air had suddenly become. And the girl shivered as she rose from her seat on the old log and turned homeward. The man followed, walking as one in deep thought—regret? Possibly, but more likely relief—that this unpleasant avowal was so well over. Oh! blind and foolish mortals! how often do we cast away the one best chance of happiness! What do you say, Sobersides? Perhaps he jilted her because she was plain. She was not: she was better than pretty—she was charming, and to me she was the realization of the model woman so often quoted, but so seldom seen—“the perfect woman, nobly planned,” &c., &c. He was a fool, you say. Wrong again: he had plenty of brain power, but he was simply heartless, and “of the earth, earthy.” And he could no more appreciate or understand such a woman than one of Daddy’s caterpillars could the perfume and beauty of a lily. Some day, Sobersides, I will tell you how the gods avenged her. Heigho! they tell us love is blind, and this poor man, being out of love, was blind also, and so he walked on congratulating himself on the very clever way he had “got out of that little affair.” And they both reached that part of the road where the gully opens, and the girl stood and looked over the plains towards the setting sun: her face was white and stern, and into her eyes came tears. For her sun had gone down into that sea

which closes over faith and hope and all that made the sunshine of her life. Ah! never again would it seem as lovely as when they passed three hours since—and yet it was as beautiful. The little church glowed yellow as it caught the last golden flash of sunlight. On the opposite hill some cypress trees stood black against a background of pink sky. Lower down the gum trees were olive green in the shadow, except where the lingering rays of the sun dyed their tops with golden bronze. The side of the gully was white with the snowy bloom of pear trees, and deep down at the bottom, where the road seemed (from the height where the girl stood) only a little path, the scarlet-coated huntsmen were slowly returning home. And on the girl's heart fell the shadow of despair, even as the violet mists creeping up the hollow of the hills fell on the close of that day at Moraba.



THE STORY OF A JAPANESE VASE.

Dramatis Personæ :—AUNT LOO—NIECE FLOSSIE—JACK (Aunt Loo's lover).

Scene :—Drawingroom, Potts Point.

Jack :



HAT are they saying, this couple of Japs,
 Ensconced 'neath the big umbrella?
 Well, as he looks rather worried, perhaps
 He may be trying to tell her
 Three hundred a year's not enough for
two—

Yes, I assure you the story is true.

Flossie : Do you think that it *really* is, Aunt Loo?

Jack : He is a man who, when first they met,

Had very good expectations ;

She is a girl in a stylish set.

He has failed, and her rich relations

Will say—will say what's perfectly true,

Three hundred a year's not enough for two.

Flossie : Is that what they *really* will say, Aunt Loo?

Jack : There isn't a doubt they will when they know
 That he's lost in the silver stocks ;
 So he's only to say good-bye, and go
 Away to the back back-blocks.
 Three hundred a year's not enough for two,
 He can sing to himself the whole day through.

Aunt Loo : He need not sing *that*, when it *is not* true.

Jack : What ! do you mean it, my darling Loo ?

Flossie (staring blankly after them as they move up to
 the conservatory) :

When a story is told me I cannot see why
 That silly Aunt Loo should look ready to cry.
 And if she does, I don't think it fun
 To go off when the story was barely begun ;
 But I'm going to drive into town with Aunt Fan,
 So I'll take up the vase to the Japanese man—
 He'll be able to finish the story, because
 There are Japanese letters all over the vase.



In Memoriam.

I nez, the bright, the talented, the good,
 'N eath Austral skies no longer dwells ;
 E arth holds her not, but far away
 Z ones of celestial beauty charm her soul.

H er loved ones there now claim her as their own,
 Y et loved ones here she never will forget ;
 L ove is not selfish—oft to earth she'll turn,
 A nd strive to comfort those she left behind.
 N or is this all : she as an angel bright and fair
 D oth watch and guard and help the dear ones here.

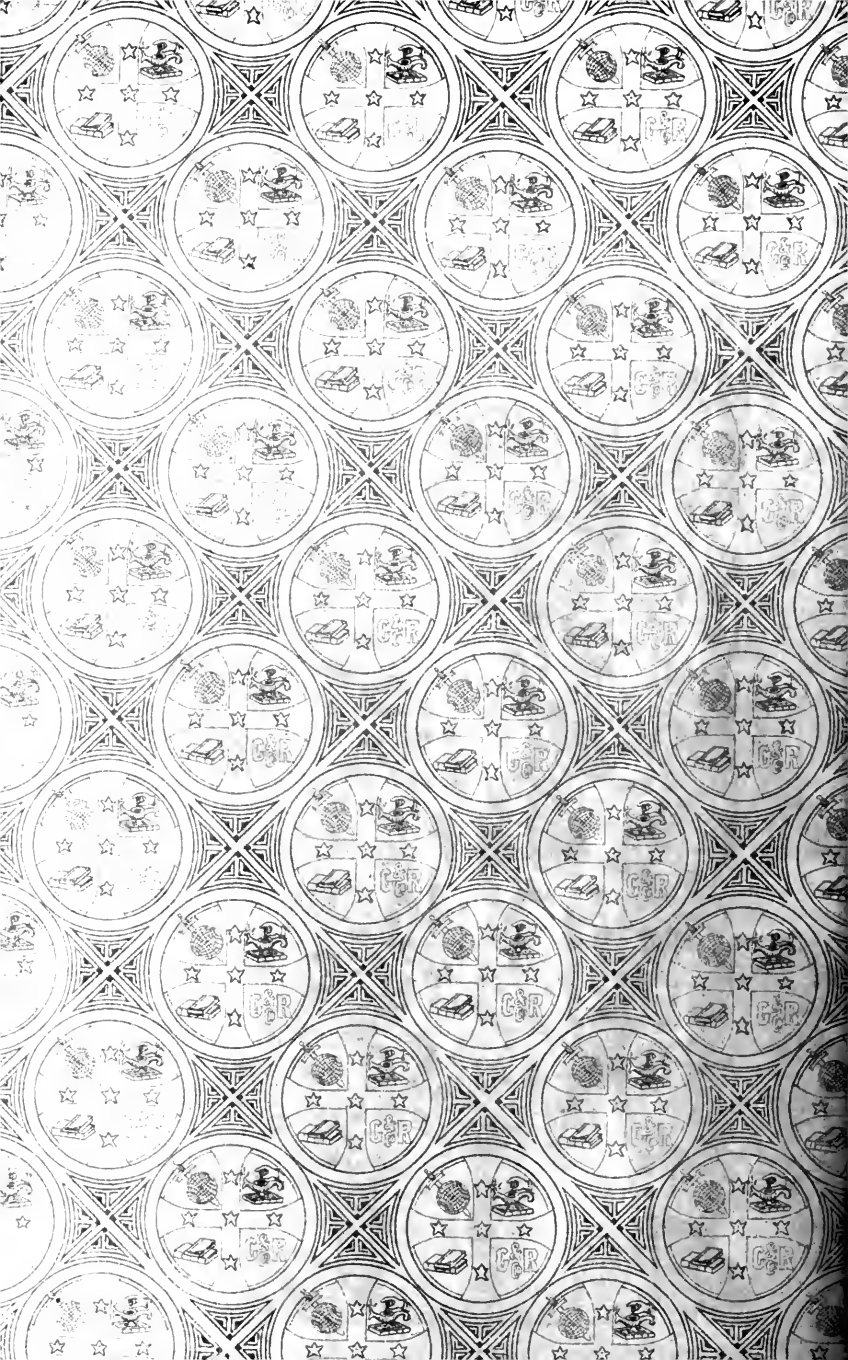
E. V. S. K.

CASTLEMAINE, *8th February*, 1892.









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